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**REPORT**

OF THE

**General Superintendent**

OF

**F R E E D M E N**

DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE

AND STATE OF ARKANSAS

**For 1864.**

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MEMPHIS, TENN.:

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REPORT.

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OFFICE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF FREEDMEN,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE AND STATE OF ARKANSAS,  
MEMPHIS, TENN., December 31st, 1864.

BRIG. GEN. L. THOMAS,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL, U. S. A.

GENERAL,—This supervision has, during the year, extended over a territory from Cairo, Southward, in the Mississippi Valley, populated, according to the census of 1860, by 770,000 blacks ; including the cities of Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez, and Little Rock, and the military posts of Columbus, Island 10, Corinth, Helena, Du Vall's Bluff, Pine Bluff, Fort Smith, Goodrich Land-ing, Milliken's Bend, and Davis Bend.

PREVIOUS CONDITION OF THE FREEDMEN.

No phase of the former condition of this people, or of their present transition, has been excluded from our view. Previous to the time covered by this report, the officers of this supervision had more than a year's experience among the above population, observing and directing similar causes and results. These were never fully reported. Though that experience has a direct bearing upon our present plans, it can be admitted here only as shaping the views, policy and facts herein epitomized.

The rebellion, at the outset, began to disturb this population, by an increase from Missouri, and a decrease southward ; by the masters' diminishing the supply of clothing,—increasing or de-creasing in severity as affected by the shock of arms,—and by the seizure of the blacks, for military purposes, by the insurgents. The frequent marching and countermarching of loyal and dis-loyal armies, consuming or destroying the material comforts of life, such as food, shelter, and the implements of industry ; the actual shock of arms, or the terror of their motion, left hardly an individual, white or black, unaffected. It was soon evident that the strength of these regions consisted in three distinct

elements : masters, slaves and poor whites. Many of the last were forced into the rebel armies, furnished with horses and better food and clothing, and their families were supported ; and, therefore, they failed to see, so soon as some of the negroes and the Southern unionists, that the interests of these elements were not only diverse, but hostile ; and that the war was the effort of the master to render irrevocably supreme the power of his own caste. Some whites looked Northward ; but the blacks illustrated what the history of the world has rarely seen,—a slave population, sprung from antecedent barbarism, rising up and leaving its bondage of centuries, and its ardent local traditions and associations, sundering the boasted influences and attractions of the master ; in rags or silks ; feet shod or bleeding ; individually or in families ; and pressing towards the armies characterized as “Vandal hordes.” Their comings were like the arrivals of cities. Often they met prejudices against their color, more bitter than that they had left behind. There was no Moses to lead, nor plan in their exodus. The decision of their instinct or unlettered reason brought them to us. They felt that their interests were identical with the objects of our armies. This identity of interest, slowly but surely, came to be perceived by our officers and soldiers, and by the loyal public. They gave information for the guidance of campaigns ; laborers for the various staff departments ; took upon themselves all the serving of the army for officers, hospitals, &c. ; and soon were accepted as capable of the soldier’s discipline and endurance in all arms of the service, and worthy of a soldier’s pay and honor. Out of those who came within our lines, probably not less than 80,000 have either died in the United States service, or are still in it as laborers or soldiers.

But there was a background to this sublime march of events. Ignorance ; perverted ideas—taking liberty for idleness—embracing all the fostered vices and crimes of the old system, eringing deceit, theft, absence of chastity, and of the safeguards and promptings of the family relation ; tatters, nakedness, torn limbs ; women in travail ; helpless childhood ; age and decrepitude ; multiform sickness and unwept death. The sublime dashings and roar of the surge could not conceal the wreck or drown the piercing cry of distress. The army shared its own food, shelter and clothing ; charity, gathering in its small rills from the loyal mountains and valleys, came forward in a full, gushing stream, bearing laborers and material.

## GENERAL GRANT AND THE ARMY.

The laws of Congress had freed some; the proclamation, all. The law of the army, here the only expression of the law of the land, began to declare itself in behalf of the blacks. All the wise and humane devisings and issues of General Grant, antedate the past year, though pervading its events, as they must those of the future.

It is not unworthy of note here, that the army, though embracing in itself all the instrumentalities for the destruction of its foe, at whatever cost of comfort, treasure and life; though having in it the usual admixture of good and bad; though looked upon by many benevolent people, as only another master for the black; has done all that has been done to free, feed, shelter, protect and give him medical attendance; and has formed the only safe channel for the benevolence, that has come to his aid; nay, has added to protection, transportation, rations and quarters. More than all this, it has sought out of its forms for administering justice, an adaptation to the peculiar condition of these freed people.

This has been the work in the hands of my officers and myself. To some extent, it may have affected all of the above 770,000, during the year; but direct authority has reached them only when they or their employers have come within our lines; and this report must be, necessarily, subject to the usual military limitations. I cannot stop even to mention the circumstances of their removal from Corinth and Island 10. My object is not so much to detail the history, as to concentrate those events, facts and opinions, which may serve to throw light upon the future.

## DUTY UNDER ORDERS NO. 94.

Special orders, No. 94, (of the Secretary of War, issued by Adjutant General Thomas, at Goodrich Landing, La., Nov. 5th, 1863,) provides that the General Superintendent of Freedmen shall assign,

"The Field and Staff of the Regiments raised by him, for the supervision and protection of these people and their industry, to duty as General Assistants, and the companies and their commanders to local duty. All Assistant Superintendents will be subject to his order.

"This supervision will embrace the general guardianship of all interests of the freed people; their registration; all necessary permits and contracts for labor with private parties, lessees, officers, citizens, or others; the provision of industry for them in camp, or on plantations; determine the location of camps, the occupation of plantations to be worked by the

infirm, vagrant, or idle, and all others necessarily or temporarily in charge of the Government.

"No freed people will be recruited or ordered out of camp, excepting through the officer in charge.

"Superintendents will encourage the people to answer calls to industry, by voluntary agreement to labor, and enforce the inviolability of the agreement.

"To prevent the frequent infringement of the interests of these people, and secure proper uniformity to the action of the Government, there will be no change of the regulations, forms of contracts, permits, &c., except through the General Superintendent."

#### THE GUARD REGIMENTS.

The organization of these regiments, approved by General Grant, and ordered by the Secretary of War, (by Adjutant General Thomas,) for this special purpose, has not only proved eminently serviceable, but the only instrumentality for the execution of the above order.

#### TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS.

To facilitate the work, the territory was divided into the Districts of West Tennessee, office at Memphis, Capt. T. A. Walker, Supt.; Arkansas, office at Little Rock, Maj W. G. Sargent, Supt.; with local offices at Helena, Capt. A. L. Thayer; Pine Bluff, Capt. Mallory; Du Vall's Bluff, Lt. W. Davis; and Fort Smith; District of Vicksburg, office at Vicksburg, Col. Samuel Thomas, Supt. and Provost Marshal, assisted by Lieut. Col. A. L. Mitchell, at Natchez; Capt. Norton, at Davis Bend; Lieut. Thirds, at Vidalia; Lieut. Mathews, at Goodrich Landing; and Capt. Weber, at Vicksburg.

#### WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THEM?

The change of the negro's position at once excited to activity all the old prejudices regarding him, and renewed, in various forms, the old conflicts over the question, What shall be done with him? Shall he still be treated as, in fact, a slave to the individual, or be required to work for the Government, without supplies, pay, or the consideration that was accorded to him when he was of value as a marketable commodity? Or shall he be *free*? Shall these men and women, long abused, whose industry was the source of all the regal wealth which adorned the Southern palaces; who have come over from the enemy to our help, be held deserving of our consideration? Shall they, who have been robbed of manhood,—of the very essentials of improve-

ment in personal character and condition, receive from us due sympathy? Shall they, who, whatever their capacity, yet need our temporary care, until they become conscious of their ability to use the instrumentalities around them for their good, be refused our help? Shall they, who, as laborers, could give efficiency to the staff departments of the army; or, as soldiers, form regimental organizations, and thus promote military ends, be thoughtlessly pushed aside? Shall they, who are familiar with the by-paths and cotton piles; and could become the carriers of supplies through our lines to the enemy; or, as the tillers of this rich soil, rendered a hundred fold more productive by the increased value of the cotton fibre; and thus the negro, himself, a hundred fold more an object of the consideration of speculative capital; be disregarded by Government?

#### PREJUDICES.

In the midst of all the conflicts of interests, which arose out of this state of affairs, and of the temptations incidental to the occasion; and of the scramble that ensued, among various parties, for emolument; and of fellow-officers, who, not only did not respect, but found a peculiar pleasure in obstructing, the settled policy of the Government—and sneering at the “nigger men”—my assistants were exposed to a test more severe to moral courage than the battle-field, and more trying to judicial and business capacity, than any amount of perplexity in more peaceful and common scenes. It is not surprising that some officers failed, or that it was difficult to secure and retain those most faithful. Those who have stood the test, could have no better proof of official merit.

#### DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR.

In addition to this territorial subdivision of labor among my assistants, the importance of three classes of interests, namely: The control of property; the supply of medicines and medical attendance; and the arrangement of educational affairs, rendered it necessary that I should have one officer, whom I could hold responsible for each of these classes of labor. In respect to education, during nine months, this plan was defeated by circumstances beyond my control. Lieut. B. K. Johnston was assigned to duty as A. A. Q. M., and A. C. S., of Freedmen, and has done much for the economicol management of property; render-

ing satisfactory reports to Washington, as usually required of officers of those Departments. To meet the medical necessities, Dr. D. O. McCord, Surgeon, 63rd U. S. C. I., was designated Surgeon-in-chief of Freedmen. His powers, by this assignment, proved inadequate. The sanitary condition of the people was appalling. Neither medicines nor surgeons were at hand. Every one acknowledged the importance of doing something. The distress and confusion were met by Orders 114, of the Secretary of War, issued by Adjt. Gen. Thomas, making Surgeon McCord, Medical Director, with power to employ surgeons and control medicines.

#### NO MONEY DRAWN FROM GOVERNMENT.

All officers handling supplies, received from the Government, adjusted their methods of business, forms of reports, vouchers, &c., to army regulations. Not a cent of money has ever been drawn from Government, for the Freedmen, on any account. A careful use of the tax, temporarily required by orders 63, and of funds accruing from the profits of labor of the department, under the care of the different superintendents, has met all the incidental expenses of these wide spread operations; paid five thousand dollars for hospitals; the salaries of all hospital stewards and medical assistants as per Orders 94, and enabled us to supply to the people, aside from the abandoned property, implements of industry, &c., secured to their benefit, clothing, household utensils, and other articles, essential to their comfort, which they could not have secured, otherwise, at less than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The management of these funds and supplies, has sprung out of the exigencies of the people's condition; adapted, as far as necessary, to army methods; requiring a rigid system of accounts, monthly reports covered by certificates and vouchers, followed up by careful inspections, not only from this office, but the different commanding Generals.

#### GENERAL ASSISTANTS.

H. B. Spelman, Esq., widely known for his scrupulous honesty and business experience, President of one of the Freedmen Aid Societies, has been employed to market the crop now closing out. Chaplain A. S. Fisk, ordered to report to me by General Grant; Chaplain Joseph Warren, D. D., by General McPherson; and Chaplain James A. Hawley, in accordance with Orders 94,

have efficiently aided in charge of the people, making inspections, checking vices, and controlling those instrumentalities which more closely affect the moral and social sentiments of the Freedmen.

#### PARTIES GIVING INFORMATION.

The parties who are best able to furnish the facts under this supervision, upon which depend questions of future management, are, 1st. The Superintendents and Provost Marshals of Freedmen; 2nd. The Freedmen themselves; 3rd. Their employers; 4th. Their teachers; 5th. Commanding officers. This testimony has been carefully sought. I shall endeavor to group it as exactly and briefly as possible for the fair judgment of others.

#### DIFFICULTIES AND EFFORTS.

The uncertainty attending all classes of interests and business under my care has been most embarrassing; interests that must be cared for; business that must be done; but to do which no one would indicate exactly how. I need not state how many efforts have been adverse to my purposes, or how far the plans I have been required to execute have differed from those I should have counseled. It is due, however, that I should state, that I have been entirely deceived in my own purposes, if I have not endeavored to conduct these affairs, so new, so complicated and perplexing, so far reaching in their consequences, as a great experiment: carefully testing each principle, and abiding by the result, with a single aim to discharge my duty to my country, by giving effect to the relations of the Government to these people; in the temporary support of the absolutely dependent; in the aid of those able in some measure to help themselves, and in the execution of justice towards all. Nor should I fail to add, that no one can feel the inadequate results of my efforts as keenly as I do myself.

#### ASSISTANT GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT.

The importance of giving my personal attention, at remote points, to difficulties, to plans and inspections, necessitated the appointment of Col. SAMUEL THOMAS, as Assistant General Superintendent, with full authority to act in my absence. This not only extended his duties, but rendered them more complicated. He has limited himself in his report, however, to the operations in his own district. His territory, as he remarks:

## EARLY CONDITION OF VICKSBURG DISTRICT.

"In nearly every part was a camping ground for a large army during the Vicksburg campaign, breaking up the plantations, scattering the negroes, and compelling them to seek protection and aid, in large numbers; and since that time the District has been the scene of campaigns innumerable, made by small forces on both sides, keeping the country in a disturbed and excited state. Whatever has been done, has been accomplished in the face of a guerrilla warfare, that cannot be surpassed for vindictiveness and cruelty. Many of the guerrillas were natives, well acquainted with the country, and feeling that they were driving from their own homes the negroes and Yankees, have exhibited a ferocity which only Camanches can equal."

## NATCHEZ—MAJOR YOUNG.

"Our occupation of Natchez and the disappearance of many rich planters, induced the negroes there, also, to gather around our lines in thousands. Nothing was done for their permanent good, until Major Geo. W. Young was appointed my assistant at that post, in November, 1863. Unable to obtain assistants, nobly discharging the duties of his office himself, he introduced cleanliness, health and comfort, into their camp, by rebuilding their houses and adding chimneys, floors and windows. In a few months he prompted to industry all but 600 out of the 5,000 reported dependent upon the Government. He fought a regular campaign with the old slave ideas and notions of the wealthy Southerners of the city, defending the interests of the black man, even against some of his superior officers."

## DISTRESS AT YOUNG'S POINT.

"Our efforts to do anything for these people, as they herded together in masses, when founded on any expectation that they would help themselves, often failed; they had become so completely broken down in spirit, through suffering, that it was almost impossible to arouse them. The camp at Young's Point, during the summer of 1863, had been a vast charnel house—thousands of the people dying, without well ones enough to inter the dead."

Others of these massive gatherings of the people were in little better condition. Col. Thomas observes :

"I hope I may never be called on again to witness the horrible scenes I saw in those first days of the history of the Freedmen in the Mississippi Valley. Assistants were hard to get, especially the kind that would do any good in our camps. A detailed soldier in each camp of a thousand people was the best that could be done. His duties were so onerous that he ended by doing nothing."

## LABOR—ITS EFFECT.

“Our first efforts were to get the people at some kind of labor. Axes and teams were sent to the camps; wood cutting and hauling, and the erection of cabins commenced; disease left them; spirit returned; there was improvement on all hands. Plans were devised to enforce honest payment for their industry in all directions.

“A great deal has been said against camping large bodies of them together. We have endeavored to avoid this by all reasonable means; but humanity said, place them where they will be protected from guerrillas, even if there be greater danger from disease. Islands were selected. General Grant once visited Paw Paw Island, in the midst of his untold efforts, for the purpose of promoting the comfort and enterprise of the people. Little was accomplished, however, till after the fall of Vicksburg. At Goodrich Landing we urged the adoption of the same simple means of industry; but that place not being under the charge of this supervision, no one was able to keep the tottering plan on its legs. Still considerable was done; though there were few visible results, when the people were thrown upon my hands. Several teachers and other benevolent persons were in the field aiding us in fighting the difficulties step by step; making some perceptible advancement, but so slow that the boldest and most stout hearted were often discouraged at the small results.

“In reviewing the condition of the people at that time, I am not surprised at the marvelous stories told by visitors, who caught an occasional glimpse of the misery and wretchedness in these camps.

“All felt that we were trying an experiment; but none of us doubted final success. No one felt that slavery was a divine institution; but the great question at this time was, whether we had pursued a wise course? All did not, at first, see that the devastating influence of a campaign through the country had reduced to starvation and beggary, whites as well as blacks, and that their wretched condition was but the natural result of the tremendous transition affecting all colors and classes. The only way for the negro to get out of the darkness that shrouded his prospects, was by patient toil, and the slow process that has discouraged so many. The poor slave, in his blindness, felt it was a bad exchange to leave the well filled smokehouses and comfortable cabins of his master's plantation, and get instead, the crowded tents and hard fare of our camps. Some white men, who think liberty and manliness not worth so much as a full stomach, felt as the slaves did.

“New men were placed in charge of the camps, to take the places of unworthy and inefficiency ones, and every effort was made to inaugurate a new system, and meet the demands of the people by an activity on our part that would encourage them to press forward.”

## ARKANSAS.

Major Sargent reached his field of labor in January, 1864.

“There had been various attempts at local supervision of the people in Arkansas. At Helena, before the place came under this supervision,

the experience of the people had been much like that at Young's Point; the mortality, as is well known, was great; the destitution was immense; the freedmen in a loose, disorganized condition; no well regulated system of compensated labor; no well defined authoritative supervision. The freedmen camps had been broken up and destroyed by the advance and retreat of the rebel army. There were various changes of Superintendents, one of whom, I understand, never visited the camps, while acting in that capacity."

Similar statements could be greatly multiplied. Dr. McCord, Medical Director, ordered a thorough inspection, by Surgeon Wright, of the whole field. Dr. Wright's statements fully correspond with the above.

#### CLOTHING PROVIDED.

The necessities for clothing were met, as far as possible, by the use of deceased soldiers' clothing, turned over by hospitals in obedience to orders from the Secretary of War, by Adjutant Gen. Thomas; by using the funds on hand to bring forward supplies from the North; and by donations received from various benevolent sources.

Chaplain A. S. Fisk, by direction of Gen. Grant, was sent to represent, to the loyal public, the necessities of the winter. As the result of his efforts, goods to the amount of more than \$100,000 were reported forwarded through the channels of various benevolent societies.

#### ARRANGEMENTS FOR LABOR.

In reference to former plantation hands, all looked for a supply of labor on the soil at the opening of the season. I proposed first, that commanders should indicate the limits within which security could be assured. Second, that within these limits all negroes able to conduct independent enterprises, as lessees, should take out leases for small farms from the Treasury Department. Third, that those capable of such enterprises, but without means to prosecute them, should receive the needed assistance from benevolent individuals or societies; or subsistence and other incidental aid from the Government—the amount to be deducted from the first income of the crop. Fourth, that sufficient land, houses, &c., should be reserved for shelter and industry of all those necessarily dependent. I had invited benevolent societies to come forward and furnish funds, agents, &c., and provide for as many as possible. I proposed that those re-

maining should be similarly provided for by Government. Fifth, that loyal owners, if any, still in possession of their lands, or those parties leasing of the Treasury abandoned lands within these limits of security, should hire the Freedmen; a minimum rate being fixed, below which none should go, to guard against fraud upon the more ignorant, and above which prices might rise *ad libitum*, for all services of special value, as prompted by competition, each engagement to be a *bona fide* voluntary agreement between the parties, and witnessed by the proper Superintendent, the inviolability of which should be strictly enforced by the Government. Several benevolent societies indicated a readiness to co-operate.

#### BENEVOLENT ACTION.

Illustrative of a few things that were, and more that might have been done at this time, is a remark of Colonel Thomas, following his description of the distress at Young's Point.

"Elkanah Beard, agent of the Indiana yearly meeting of Friends, came to me, as my good genius, about this time, and, with his good wife, nobly volunteered to go to Young's Point, and commence their labors. I remember well the cold, windy Sabbath morning when they put up a tent, which I had given them, on the bank of the river, in front of the camp, and cheerfully began their work, without any of the comforts, and with but few of the necessities of life."

While the winter was hurrying by, in addition to supplying support and industry to those crowded together in camps, my officers were endeavoring to secure justice among and towards all Freedmen resident in cities; removing all who had no visible means of support,—alike as the best means of providing for their individual good, and securing the towns against the prevalence of small pox and other diseases. They were to introduce every practicable form of industry, and to secure all possible governmental and benevolent aid, amid difficulties which no others can know. For encouragement they had to look to their own convictions of duty, and the approbations of the future.

#### PROPOSED SCHEMES,—SPECULATION.

Various more or less impracticable schemes were proposed. The supreme authorities had not indicated the details of any plan, notwithstanding a large amount of capital came forward to employ labor. Finally, a scheme was proposed, with far off excel-

lent ends, possessing some features already tried and found practicable; but on a civil basis, and combining the control of the property leased, and of the people to be employed, so in the same hands as to render impossible the making of it, on the whole, either practicable for the employer, devoid as it was of protection; or to the employee, destitute as it was of any instrumentality for the execution of justice in his behalf, beyond the appeal to the money motive. The spirit of speculation ran high. Parties bid a considerable per cent. for the opportunity of choosing plantations. The whole valley was to be lined with cotton fields, cultivated with free, compensated industry. General Sherman clearly indicated that only certain cities and posts were to be garrisoned; and that all other interests must be subordinated to military operations, without revealing the plans of the stupendous campaigns already devised by General Grant. Many of the more thoughtful capitalists left the field. General confusion was produced, without means to inaugurate system, or remove conflict.

#### PLAN RENDERING FREEDMEN'S DEPARTMENT HELPLESS.

This scheme came in such a manner, and was inaugurated by such measures, as to leave this supervision practically powerless for good toward the great mass of the freed people, who were not collected in cities. It assumed such authority, that the Freedmen Department could do nothing but surrender all jurisdiction.

#### CHANGE THROUGH ORDERS NO. 9.

The confusion continued until March, 1864, wheu Orders No. 9, of the Secretary of War, were issued by Adjutant General Thomas. Col. Thomas observes:

"The plan of leasing abandoned plantations seems to have been made the settled policy of the Government. The trouble was, as to the manner in which this should be done. Several plans were proposed. Gen. Thomas issued Orders 9, which settled the matter as far as the Freedmen were concerned, leaving the leasing of the plantations to the Treasury Department. Our office made arrangements for granting permits to planters for Freedmen in our camps, and for assisting in every way the transfer of all idle persons from camps to plantations.

"Plantations were leased by hundreds, in every conceivable place, and as far out in the rebel lines as parties leasing could hear the name of a plantation, and the few statistics necessary to procure such lease. Men

from the North, by hundreds, flocked here eager to get a chance at the golden prospect, thoroughly convinced that to get a lease and a permit for hands was all that was to be done in order to secure a fortune. The Government would do the rest.

"In a short time all the plantations in safe and accessible localities were leased; and then commenced a series of operations, which has done more than anything else to bring the plantation business into discredit. Men *would* lease plantations that they had never seen, in hope that by some good stroke of fortune our armies would occupy the section of country in which they lay, so that they could enter upon the possession of the land.

#### DISAPPOINTMENT THROUGH MILITARY CHANGES.

"At this time there were a good many outposts around Vicksburg, and a great army here, and quite an extent of country protected. The planters, in their zeal, thought they had been promised that the army should remain here for their protection; but a little reflection, on their part, would have shown them the absurdity of such a notion. Vicksburg and Natchez we would certainly hold with garrisons; all else was uncertainty and wild conjecture. A short time after these planters had secured their leases they found this to be the case; as the outposts were abandoned, and the army of this District sent to swell the great host that was under the leadership of Sherman, then preparing for the Atlanta campaign. Naturally the military lines were contracted to suit the diminished force.

"In rushed each greedy planter, howling about his rights, the bad faith of the Government, and the rank injustice of the Superintendents of Freedmen, in not compelling the negroes to stay out on plantations, where the lessee himself would not risk his own life a night.

"Plantations in safe localities have had no trouble in getting hands and those who have treated their laborers right have had no difficulty in getting them to work."

#### PROVOST MARSHALS APPOINTED.

For the purpose of reconciling the diverse interests, and making the most of the season, various important points were compromised. A most essential feature was the introduction of a system of executing justice on the plantations by Provost Marshals of Freedmen. The following order made my General Assistant Provost Marshal for the Vicksburg District, including Natchez, with power to designate assistants:

HEADQUARTERS 17TH ARMY CORPS,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE,  
VICKSBURG, Mississippi, March 24, 1864. }

#### SPECIAL ORDERS NO. 80:

In accordance with instructions from the Secretary of War, L. Thomas, Adjutant General, Col. Samuel Thomas, Assistant General Su-

perintendent of Freedmen, Department of the Tennessee, is hereby appointed Provost Marshal of Freedmen on Plantations for the District of North Mississippi.

All necessary Assistant-Provost-Marshals for said District will be designated by Col. Thomas.

By order of Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson.

WILLIAM T. CLARK,  
A. A. General.

#### NECESSITY OF PROVOST MARSHALS.

The necessity for officers discharging these duties is manifest on every hand, and will appear fully acknowledged alike in the testimony of Planters and Freedmen, of employers and employees. The number has been entirely inadequate for the duties imposed upon them. Their duties were new and arduous. Sufficient books and forms of record, reports, etc., had not been provided. I quote from Col. Thomas one of the many striking illustrations of the importance of their labors:

"Unprincipled men took advantage of the negroes' ignorance to impose upon their confidence, and often robbed them of all they had. Only a few days since a negro was telling me, that eighteen months ago he had ten bales of cotton of his own on his master's plantation; that he was Maj. Gen. Grant's servant; and, blacking the General's boots one day, told him the story of his wrongs and sufferings, ending with the mention of this cotton. The General sat down and wrote him an order for it, and ordered that all officers should assist him in getting it to market. After many ordeals in getting it hauled and shipped, and refusing many offers to buy it of him, he was doomed to disappointment; in his own language, 'Ginst he got to Memphis the cotton was done gone, and he never knew who got it, or how it went.' The white man was too sharp for the negro, and had stolen what could not be got in any other way. This negro has carried on a plantation for himself this year, bought his own supplies, shipped his cotton, sold it, put the money in his pocket, and defies any man to play the same trick on him again. The example illustrates the whole subject."

#### SUPPORT OF PAUPERS.

Orders 9 did not specify how those who remained dependent upon the Government were to be provided for; but we hoped the Plantation Agents would meet their necessities, and allow the Superintendents to restrict their efforts to the execution of justice among Freedmen in cities, and Provost Marshals among those on plantations. My officers remained at their posts, directed to use every instrumentality to prompt the people to accept industry as it offered, dispensing the supplies that remained to the dependent, awaiting the coming of those Agents; but

they did not appear. It soon became manifest that the army alone had either the instrumentalities or the supplies at hand. These had already been prepared under my care, and I was ordered to continue them. The plantation scheme thus started, we have before us all the various conditions of these people, and the instrumentalities connected with their case.

#### ASSISTANCE TO COLORED FARMERS.

Still anxious to see as many independent negro farmers as possible, I directed my officers, in some cases, to divide up lands under their control, among them; and where they had leases, to guard them against unprincipled speculators; to assist them with necessary subsistence, etc., from the Government, taking a lien upon the crop as security for the payment of the same. During the period of confusion and distrust, while my officers were under the authority of the proposed scheme, benevolent effort had given up the idea of co-operation.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF FREED PEOPLE.

In view of the fact that many think of the Freedmen only in connection with abandoned property; and the amount of matter it becomes necessary to present in this Report, in reference to those on plantations; I would here, especially, call attention to several classifications of their condition, which their care embraces, showing how partially they are or can be reached by any agents controlling only industry connected with abandoned property,

First, all new arrivals, and those employed as laborers in military service, as hospital attendants, officers' servants, employees in the Commissary and Quartermaster's Departments, etc. Second, those resident in cities. Freedmen supply by far the larger share of industrial pursuits, as barbers, hackmen, draymen, porters, carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, tailors, seamstresses, laundresses, waiters in hotels and private families, cooks, etc. Not a few of these are men of wealth. Many conduct enterprises of their own, either mechanical or commercial. Some are teachers. Properly connected, too, with those resident in cities, are employees and waiters on steamboats, and stevedores. A third and large class find employment as wood choppers, on islands and at points of security along the river, rendering a service absolutely essential to our commercial and military opera-

tions. This supervision, at the suggestion of General Grant, at the outset, gave careful attention to the supply of this industry. Fourth, those who labor on plantations. These are sub-divided : First, into those who are independent planters or gardeners ; either cultivating on shares, or leasing of the owners or Government. Second, those who are employed by the owners of the lands, or the whites or blacks who lease of the Government. It will be observed, by looking over these classifications, how small a share have really any connection with abandoned lands. Yet there are not a few, who claim to be the special friends of the negro, that demand that the care of all Freedmen should be given into the hands of those agents who manage abandoned property. The negro seems, to them, to be an appendage of abandoned lands.

#### WANTS OF NEW COMERS.

All, on first coming to our lines, need direction or protection ; and most, an immediate supply of food, shelter and clothing. Often they come on mules, or horses, or carts, with more or less of their "truck." Generally, on reaching our lines, the picket officers relieve them of all stock ; in this way, the Government has been supplied with many thousand mules and horses. My officers have been instructed to secure to them the advantage of their stock, unless pressingly demanded for military purposes. Col. Thomas reports the property saved to those of one arrival, sold and turned over in cash to the respective owners, as amounting to \$2,408. Sometimes the multitude is great. The Colonel reports 5,000 in his district from General Sherman's raid into Mississippi, and 2,500 from the Red River expedition.

Few can appreciate the labors devolved upon my officers by these arrivals. Speculation, vice, and crime swarm around the mass of infancy, youth and age ; stealing their little gold and silver ; or decoying them away to abuse their ignorance, to obtain their services for nothing, or to continue their persons in the defilement to which they have become accustomed under the old system. Nothing but a military guard and the army facility for supplies was adequate. However they come, they require prompt attention. Their first employment is offered them in connection with the army.

## FREEDMEN OFFICERS RECRUITING.

The extent of their direct military service, as soldiers and laborers, is illustrated at so many points in this Report as to require no special statement here. Those first arriving, together with those in military service, constitute a large proportion of the people. My officers have frequently observed the readiness with which the able-bodied enlist, before their minds have been corrupted by life at private service, or in cities, or among the regimental camps. They have promptly directed their attention to this duty, and thus contributed, more or less, to the organization of all the numerous regiments within the limits of this supervision, as well as to the supply of all fatigue labor.

## EFFECT OF MILITARY LAW.

The history of the attempts and hinderances, and finally successful processes, by which, through military law, we have, step by step, in cities, aided the colored man in rising from the debris which fell upon him in the tumbling, broken mass, in the general wreck of old slaveocratic municipal statutes, ordinances and customs, social and civil, would be highly instructive to the statesman; but full details would be too voluminous, and I forbear. Some cities, notwithstanding the acknowledged disloyalty of a decided majority, were allowed to keep up the form of electing municipal officers, who did no more to conform to the spirit of the Government, than was compelled by military exaction, especially with reference to the negro. Citizens would pay those freed under their old State laws; but the man freed by Congress, or the Proclamation, or the exigencies of war, was most different;—was in *their* eye but an escaped “chattel.” Return him to his master they could not; but long after the presence of our armies, municipal justice was dealt out to him in personal abuses; in the application of the lash at the old whipping posts, or in doubling, for him, the fines imposed upon whites for the same offences. In some instances, appeals were made to the established Provost Marshals or Commanders. Not a few of these failed to secure justice to the negroes, either from not knowing how to do it, or from some other cause.

## DIFFICULTIES OF FREEDMEN OFFICERS.

Every attempt of my officers to secure the interests of these

people, either in the payment of proper wages, or a fair administration of justice, or considerate personal treatment, was met by all the force and violence of old prejudices, and the love of municipal fees, and the not unusual expression on the part of the Provost Marshal or Commander, that the Freedmen officer was meddling with that which was none of his business. Meantime, the law, to the negro, took any form or caprice. Any officer who wanted the service of colored men, sent out his guard and pressed them. The protection of no passes was acknowledged. The Superintendent was allowed to carry out his instructions without hinderance, either from officials or citizens, only with respect to those who were sick or outcasts, out of whom nothing could be made in the way of service or money.

#### GENERAL GRANT'S EFFORTS.

The negro population floated or was kicked about at will; thus constituting the very best channels and instrumentalities for the enemy in the execution of their purposes, either in defeating the effectiveness of interior military orders, or in passing through our lines contraband information and supplies. My officers, oppressed with labors and responsibilities, were reluctant to enter the arena. General Grant made special efforts to correct the evils through the Provost Marshals; but in vain. Events, by degrees, finally brought all the affairs of Freedmen before the Superintendents. The good sense of all parties has approved. The results are conclusive.

#### PUBLIC SPIRIT OF THE FREEDMEN.

A singular fact occurred in connection with the collection of the tax temporarily required by Orders 63, on the wages of the able-bodied, for the support of the sick and otherwise dependent. It was thought, at first, that the negroes would submit to its collection with reluctance. Instead of this, however, it being a tax on wages, compelled the employer and employee to appear, one or both, before the officer charged with its collection, who allowed no wages to go unpaid; and the negro soon saw in it his first recognition by Government; and although it appeared in the form of a burden, responded to it with alacrity; thousands finding in it the first assurance of any power protecting their right to make a bargain and hold the white man to its fulfillment. It was most interesting to watch the moral effect of taxing them. They

freely acknowledged that they ought to assist in bearing the burthen of the poor. They felt ennobled when they found that the Government was calling upon them, as men, to assist in the process by which their natural rights were to be secured. Thousands, thus saw, for the first time, any money reward for their services. The places where this tax was least rigidly collected, are now farthest behind in paying the colored man for his services.

#### PASSES.

In carrying forward the work, in cities, of bringing the people into their proper relations with the Government, we adopted no complicated machinery. Our effort was, by the simplest processes, to take things as they were, and assure the blacks of their freedom before the law, the same as whites. All whites, within military lines, must have passes; so must blacks. The Superintendent of Freedmen knew them best, and could best determine to whom to issue passes, permits, etc.; so they were all required to receive his signature, either to remain in town, or to pass the lines of the army. At first, those for residents were given for a limited period, and each was required to have some responsible party vouch for his conduct, as the employer for the employee. Soon as one's trustworthiness became established, the time was extended and he received a pass or permit, the same as any white man at military posts. The extent to which this has been a check upon contraband trade and information, and practices subversive of social order and military discipline, is daily becoming more manifest. Where there has been no irregular interference by other officers, an exact record has been kept of passes issued to residents and parties passing the lines, and the number to each branch of business or industry in which they are engaged.

All action necessary in adjudicating difficulties among the blacks, or between whites and blacks, naturally comes before my officers. As I write, however, cases are reported to me, in which injustice has resulted, by the negroes being influenced by other parties to seek redress through the remaining civil processes.

This careful bringing under view the whole city population, has enabled the Superintendents materially to overcome idleness and vagrancy, and the vices and petty crimes connected with them. Major Young observes that—

"The pass system worked like a charm. When it was made known to the Freedmen at Natchez, that it was necessary to report at my office and register their names, employment, etc., 2,000 reported themselves in three days; and I verily believe that they would all have reported in two hours, had there been a sufficient number of clerks to register their names and give them passes."

Col. Thomas,—stating the difficulties encountered,—says:

"I made many efforts to get this matter of passes before Commanding Officers, but never with success, until the arrival of Major General Dana: Freedmen's affairs are now conducted by the proper officers, who are interested in their welfare. Permits to engage in any kind of labor are granted, if, after application and examination, the person is found worthy; and to build houses and cultivate gardens. They are allowed to erect houses only outside the present line of fortifications, where a patch of land is assigned to each household.

#### REGIMENTAL VILLAGES.

"Officers of regiments are co-operating with us, in locating the families of their men in a body, on vacant lands adjoining the city, where they can labor; and yet far enough from the regimental camps to prevent the demoralization attendant upon constant intercourse. It is the only true plan to dispose of the wives and children of our soldiers. It is an injustice to those who are fighting in our armies to expose their families to murder and re-enslavement on distant plantations, which often happened during the excited speculations in the early part of the year."

Thus, outside of the cities, but within the limits of security, they have the advantage of schools and other civilizing influences. New comers are allowed passes for a short time, to see if they can provide for themselves. Artisans have been specially encouraged to remain in town. This population in cities, and around military posts, constitutes by far the larger class. Very many of those in cities find employment as stevedores, waiters, etc., on steamboats. The old ideas with reference to negroes, manifest no tougher form than among boatmen. They were rough enough towards any negro not "disgraced" by receiving his freedom during the war. A fair compensation for services, to him, was too full an acknowledgment of the supremacy of national authority. Occasionally, severe fines by the Provost Marshals have been necessary. The high wages exacted by white boatmen, have not only necessitated the employment of colored men, but such treatment and compensation as would secure their services. The prices paid are no longer a subject of complaint. But river steamboat customs will hardly be adjusted to the new order of things until the full force of interest is felt.

## EMPLOYED IN WOOD-YARDS.

The third class—those employed in wood-yards, though subject to constant variations in numbers, like those above, has been large; their work, essential to the keeping open of the river. Planters, not unfrequently forgetful that without the commerce moved by the fuel furnished by these laborers, their operations would be valueless or impossible, have demanded that all wood choppers should be forced to work on their plantations.

Wood chopping has generally sprung up, here and there, along the bank, to invite steamboats to land, and to secure a little gain; or in connection with the gatherings of Freedmen, as aided and directed by my assistants. The necessity for wood has compelled us to encourage wood-yards where, for the lack of sufficient force at our control, we were unable to protect the rights of the people. The faults charged upon contractors, in those localities, are not those of inflicting severe punishments, nor of refusing to pay for service; but of so reckoning time, fixing rates or charging for supplies furnished, and taking no interest, any farther than profit dictated, in the sick or otherwise dependent, that they thus gathered around them, for their own interest, the able-bodied, and turned aside the destitute to suffer and die, or receive support from the Government. As illustrative, I might quote what Col. Thomas says of his District :

"The first start made toward furnishing the people in Freedmen camps with labor, was in the way of wood cutting. The wood was necessary in supplying fuel to steamers engaged in transportation of the material of war for the use of our armies. The difficulties surrounding this enterprise were great; but, by diligent exertions, yards were started at Young's Point, Paw Paw Island, Omega Landing and Island 102. Many private parties also started woodyards at other places in a small way. The woodyards under this supervision seemed to point out the way in which they could make money. A grand rush was thus made by all who could gather together the material necessary for such an enterprise. One of the greatest drawbacks experienced in this work was the difficulty of getting the right kind of men to run the yards,—men who were capable of doing the business, and yet were humane, kind, industrious and energetic. Our experiments were various and often discouraging. Few men could stand up to the labor required of them, as they would have, under their charge, a camp of one thousand or more people; and have to attend to the distribution of rations, to the work done, and to the general improvement of the camp. It was not strange that men broke down under the responsibility, and refused to perform the labor.

## WOODYARDS TURNED OVER TO CAPT. RUSCH.

"I am somewhat at a loss to get at the figures, in order to give you the statistics of these yards; but will give, as nearly as possible, what will be an approximation to the different items. Before doing this, I should state, that in accordance with an order issued by the Secretary of War, in March, 1864, placing all woodyards under the control of Capt. N. J. Rusch, A. Q. M., I turned over the woodyards September 1st. He had represented to the Government that he had a project, by which he could bring thousands of white laborers into the Mississippi Valley; and the authorities, feeling that such a project, if successful, would place that number of men virtually in the field, granted him the necessary authority.

"I was acquainted with his idea, and am sure he never mentioned any purpose to assume charge of the Freedmen camp woodyards, or to interfere with the supervision of these people. But his order was issued in March; time was passing away; six months had passed without his plan doing anything; and he felt that something must be done, and a showing of success, at least, be made, or the War Department would become dissatisfied with his failure. Knowing that the Freedmen woodyards were being conducted very successfully, and produced large amounts of wood, he turned his attention to them; and by construing his order as was never intended by the authorities who issued it, he demanded that I should turn over to him the woodyards; and General Slocum, then in command, ordered in accordance with his wishes.

## STATISTICS OF WOODYARDS.

"At this time there had been cut in the District, and delivered to steamboats, over 60,000 cords of wood, bringing to the Freedmen over \$120,000, and saving to the Government an expense of about \$90,000 more, by selling at \$1 50 per cord less than it could have got it from private parties. This wood was cut at very little expense to the Quartermaster's Department. Teams, wagons and gearing, brought in by the negroes from their plantation homes, were put into the yards by their owners, who felt willing to have them used for the convenience of the woodyards, while they were for their support. It should also be added, that several thousand cords of this wood were taken by the Government, and no vouchers given by the authorities taking it,—being a clean gift from the negroes to the Government.

## IMPORTANCE OF WOODYARDS.

"As woodyard labor is one of the many features of this District, and should be one of the most important that Freedmen industry is applied to, owing to its manifest necessity in carrying on military operations, I must go more into detail. The question now occupying the minds of officers in charge of Freedmen's affairs, as well as of the Commanding Generals, is, what is to be done with the negro after the planting season is over?

"It is plain that it will be impossible to lease as large a number of plantations for the coming season as were leased for the closing year; nor

can as many Freedmen be employed on plantations, without making military operations subservient to the cotton raising interest; which is not the intention of the Government. The Commanding General has, accordingly, looked over the various plans for providing labor for the Freedmen, and has manifested his conviction of the soundness of this plan. At the different Government woodyards in this District it is safe to say, that over one thousand people have been employed; in private enterprises of like nature, fully five hundred more; making a working force of 1,500, and a dependency of, at least, as many more; so that the aggregate is 3,000. Now this can easily be increased, next year, to 5,000 people, who can cut wood, support themselves, and be no burden to the Government. They can be placed in safe localities, where there is no danger of their being murdered or carried away; and where the supplies, intended for them, will not fall into the hands of rebels.

"The woodyards under my care were located in the vicinity of our camps; in places where it was safe for the working people and their friends, and also safe for steamers to land. The Superintendents in charge used the utmost exertion to have all the people in the camps perform some kind of labor—the men chopping, hauling, etc.; the women loading, unloading, and cording it on its arrival in the yard. Efforts were made to combine all sorts of labor, whether profitable or not, as the Government was responsible for the support of the people, and they should, in return, do as much as they could. The wood was sold to Government and private parties, the people paid, and the balance turned over to the Freedmen Fund, and used for the purchase of clothing and other articles furnished to them, which the Government did not supply. It was our intention to introduce, as soon as possible, a system of machinery, by which the people could cut and deliver an increased amount of wood. With the produce of lands which the camps were working, and with the increase of their means otherwise, the people were drawing fewer rations every month; and there was good reason to hope that they would soon be independent and self-supporting. Rations were issued to all alike, and there was no attempt made to make the chopper pay for what he received, as he was helping to support and care for the dependent portion of the camp, and should himself be fed on that account.

"As has been before mentioned, the teams, wagons, etc., belonged to the negroes themselves. Such property was of all descriptions, and often of the rudest make; but served a good purpose. All these teams were taken up on the papers of the Quartermaster of Freedmen, so that forage could be drawn for their support; and the property, in like manner, secured to the people from seizure. It was used in the camps for the general welfare of all. The people were contented with this arrangement, and were encouraged by the good faith of the officers in charge. Situated on richly-wooded, fertile and secure islands; finding a ready market for all they could produce; affording not only a support to the people in them, but an opening for thousands more who now infest our military posts, or languish on distant plantations; gradually educating the people, and making them independent and self-reliant; of no great expense to the

Government; they were, in my view, among the most hopeful and encouraging of my district.

PLAN OF CAPT. RUSCH.

"The plan was simple, and claimed no great advantages, except that all the interests of the colored people were kept combined in the hands of one set of officers; and that all the branches of industry and improvement were carried along together, without the sacrifice of any. The gain from wood-cutting was expended in building houses, supplying tools, etc. Capt. Rusch has not materially changed the manner of conducting this business. His Superintendent merely causes the hands to cut as much wood as possible, and the teams to haul it. He has not added a team, nor sought to increase the amount of wood. He is simply using the means of these poor people; and his policy has driven away all private enterprise, and lessened by one-third, the amount of wood cut. Negroes used to cut and haul wood on their own account, with their own teams, for \$3 50 per cord; he allows them but one dollar; and of course the intelligent seek some other business and are lost to this. To supply their place he has sent many white refugees who hate the negroes; and some of whom are rebels, too cowardly to fight. They crowd out the negro and take possession of the hut which he built, forcing him and his family to unsafe plantations, where the pretentious refugee will not work. They hire only the able-bodied, in order that the yard may pay; and this leaves only the disabled in charge of the Superintendent of Freedmen; and they even go so far as to refuse us the use of the teams they have seized, to draw rations for the destitute from the landing to the storehouse. They pay one dollar per cord for cutting, and about twelve dollars a month for hauling—deducting cost of rations and furnishing nothing, but calling on us for clothes for their hands.

"I have not space to give the particulars of this scheme. I have shown the injury, both to the people and the Government, of any attempt to carry on these woodyards outside of this supervision. Capt. Rusch has tried to start several yards near our camps at Davis Bend, and met with poor success."

Capt. Walker, Superintendent of Freedmen at Memphis, on account of the limitations and infringements of the land assigned for the dependent, crowding all forms of industry and enterprise possible—making bricks, cultivating gardens, &c., has been able to do so much in no other way as in cutting wood.

In the vicinity of Helena the yards have been under private control, and the profits contributed to private ends, rather than to the support of the dependent, except on Island 63 and Old Island. Some speculators, by temerity in their location, or fraudulent practices, have not only lost their own lives, but brought untold calamities upon the blacks.

At Du Vall's Bluff,—the early Commanders not having encouraged the concentration of negro labor, not only have Government stores rotted by thousands for the want of fatigue men to handle them; but Government has paid as high as \$2 50 per cord for wood cutting; and, sometimes, has been obliged to call on the soldiers to keep up the supply for boats arriving and leaving; thus seriously impairing the efficiency of the troops, and rendering it impossible to give any considerable strength to the defenses. A different policy of late has greatly increased the industry.

Freedmen supply Government with wood at Little Rock.

Additional facts, illustrative of each of the above points, appear at the different posts. Unquestionably the demands of commerce and military operations fairly met, by a correct adjustment of this industry, according to some plan such as that already illustrated by my officers, modified as experience may suggest, will enable not less than 12,000 of these people to support themselves, within this supervision, in safety and comfort, providing, in addition, for schools, medicines, etc. Attention called to this subject, not only from Washington, but by Major General Canby and Major General Dana, gives us some hope that our wishes for the people and the Government are, in this respect, soon to be realized.

#### LOCATION OF WOOD-YARDS,—SMUGGLING.

The irresponsible location of wood-yards has had much to do with the landing of boats at unauthorized points, and the communication of contraband information and supplies to the enemy.

Though it would add specially to the burdens of my officers in charge of the Freedmen, I am confident there are no others so favorably situated to adjust this entire interest. In nearly every instance, beyond the immediate protection of military posts, islands could be selected at appropriate distances; easily rendered safe by the presence of a company or so; furnishing an abundant supply of fuel for all commercial and military purposes; rendering it entirely inexcusable for boats to land at any other point.

#### FREEDMEN ON PLANTATIONS.

In regard to the last division of labor—that of Freedmen on

plantations, so many questions of serious military bearing have been raised to Commanders, of profit and speculation to capitalists; and of life and civilizing influences to Freedmen, philanthropists and statesmen; that I have taken the utmost pains to bring forward all statistical and trustworthy information possible.

#### BONDS FOR PAYMENT OF WAGES.

The Superintendents and Provost Marshals were directed to examine all books, accounts, &c.; and if settlements had not been fully and faithfully made with the employees, to require adequate bonds for the same, before any cotton or other products of labor could be shipped. Col. Thomas reports over two hundred of these bonds filed in the Vicksburg office, representing a conditional indebtedness of over \$400,000. Lieut. Col. Mitchell, Superintendent of Natchez, reports finding it necessary to require bonds to the amount of \$10,000 in single cases.

#### QUESTIONS TO PLANTERS.

Planters, in the Vicksburg District, including Natchez, were questioned by the Provost Marshals.

In the Helena District, they met and answered the questions jointly, signing their names. Col. Thomas gives a synopsis of the answers taken down from one hundred planters. I make his synopsis the basis of the testimony, noting such differences as are found in the answers gathered from the other Districts.

I. *Food.*—1. Specify the articles of food furnished to your employees.

Bacon, pork, flour, meal, sugar, molasses, salt, some coffee, &c. This has often been varied from, and in some cases the bill of fare cut down to such articles as it would be impossible to live on.

At Helena.—Rice, beans, tea, soap, candles and vinegar have been furnished in addition to the above.

2. Specify the proportion (or amount) of each.

All that the hands wanted.

Helena.—Full rations.

3. How have the small children, infirm parents, or other dependents of those employed by you, been supplied with food?

About one-half have furnished the dependents free of charge; about one-quarter have charged the working hands with what their non-productive relatives ate; and the rest say they paid no attention how they were furnished with food.

At Helena.—“The same as laborers.”

**4. Have the rations of the sick been stopped ?**

No: except in cases of malingering.

Helena.—“They have not.”

**5. What Sanitary stores have you supplied for the sick or feeble ?**

Such articles as the attending physician recommended; no great variety generally; tea, spirits and coffee are about all.

Helena.—“Such as were needed and to be had.”

**II. Clothing.—1. How has clothing been furnished to your hands ?**

Fifty-five report, they have furnished what was necessary and charged it. Twenty did not furnish it at all, seeming to have paid little attention to it. Several claim that they have furnished a large quantity of clothing gratis, thinking it obligatory on them.

Helena.—“Such as was necessary.”

**2. What profit has been charged on the clothing sold them ?**

One-half sold at cost and transportation; one-quarter at 15 per cent. profit, and one-quarter at 25 per cent profit.

Helena.—“No profit charged.”

**3. What has been its quality and sufficiency ?**

Of good quality and in sufficient quantity.

Many complain that they are inclined to take all, or more than all, their wages in clothes.

Helena.—“The most serviceable quality, and what was necessary.”

**4. What plan would you recommend for clothing the Freedmen on plantations, in the future ?**

One-half agree, that the best plan is to charge the clothing, and pay higher wages. Some think the present plan the best.

Helena.—“Let them buy at their own discretion.”

**5. Have you sold them any gewgaws or trinkets ?**

No: is the universal answer.

Helena.—“No!”

**III. Work.—1. How many hours per day have your hands worked ?**

Much irregularity complained of; 25 report 8 hours as an average; 35 report 9 hours; and 40 report 10 hours.

Helena.—“From 6 to 8 hours.”

**2. How many days per week ?**

General answer,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  days. Some say this is too high.

Helena.—“Not more than four days per week.”

**3. What success have you had in securing industry?**

Seventy-five report no trouble; 15 have failed to secure good work; and several say that a good deal of driving was necessary. In general conversation on this subject, all admit they have worked as well as was expected. Their old slave habits, so slow and shiftless, often antagonize with the quick, active blood of the new Yankee planters.

Helena.—“Very poor.”

**4. What methods have you of securing success.**

Moral suasion. None will admit that they have abused the Freedmen, although the records of this office show that the moral suasion sometimes consisted in the use of a club.

Helena.—“No method.”

**5. Have your people labored in rainy or stormy weather?**

“No,” is the universal answer.

Helena.—“No.”

**6. What disposition to labor have they manifested as a class?**

The majority say that when not disturbed by raids, they show willingness to work.

Helena.—“Very little as a class.”

**7. Does your success show any superiority of free over slave labor?**

The planters show no knowledge of slave labor. The absence of the able-bodied men in the army, and the prevalence of raids, are adduced as reasons, by some, why free labor at this time cannot compare favorably.

Helena.—“We have no means of comparison.”

**8. Is severity of manner, or profanity, necessary or useful in promoting industry?**

Two-thirds answer, No. Some old planters, not yet clear of the old notions, claim that they are, and try to practise them.

Helena.—“Emphatically, severity is necessary; profanity is not.”

**9. Do you see any improvement in their industrial habits?**

Planters are about equally divided on this subject. Those who were capable of developing this kind of labor, report an improvement; those who seem to have arrived at the almighty dollar only, and pay no attention to the progress of their hands, report no change.

Helena.—“They have improved in industry.”

**IV. Wages.—1. What rates have you paid?**

All but ten, in accordance with Orders 9; mechanics, &c., more than this. Ten have paid the highest wages in full for services, and allowed the hands to furnish their own subsistence.

Helena.—“Rates of Orders 9, as a rule; the best hands more. One

paid the highest wages in full, and allowed the hands to purchase their own subsistence."

2. How have they been paid?

One-half the wages, (mostly in the form of clothes and other necessary articles,) paid as the hands have worked; the other half of the wages has been reserved until the end of the season. Some of the planters, however, have paid up at the end of each month.

Helena.—"In money and clothing."

3. What is the most judicious plan of compensation?

The planters generally recommend, that a part of the wages be retained, as at present, to prevent running around; and that the rest be paid at stated periods to the hands, with which they may purchase any rations, clothing or other articles needed.

Helena.—"Pay them in money."

4. Would you leave the rate of wages, and the manner and time of payment entirely to the agreement of the parties?

No; Government should fix some minimum amount.

Helena.—"We would."

5. Would you classify by their ages, without regard to capacity or diligence, and thus determine the pay of these classes?

No; Age and sex are poor criterions.

Helena.—"We would not."

6. Would you classify according to merit; fix a minimum price for each class, and allow the parties to contract at any price above that?

Yes; this is the best plan, as it is just, reliable, and incentive to activity, and an approach to the method by which white laborers are paid in the North.

Helena.—"We would."

V. *Sanitary Affairs.*—1. How have your laborers been supplied with medicines and medical attendance?

All say that they have furnished these things free. But I know that but little in this line has been done for the negro, and that they have been left to take care of themselves, except in extreme cases.

Helena.—"Have kept a supply of medicine on each plantation, and had a physician when necessary."

2. Can you suggest any better plan?

No; unless they are to pay for all they get—medical supplies as well as other things.

Helena.—"We cannot." (See concluding remarks.)

VI. *Schools.*—1. To what extent have your employees or their children attended school?

2. If none, or very little, why ?
3. Have they otherwise received any instructions ?

The above questions are taken together, as none of them have kept any schools going on their plantations, except a few Sabbath schools; but few books have been distributed or sold; in general nothing has been done by the planters.

Helena.—1. "To a very limited extent."

2. "It has been impossible to procure teachers on account of raids, the want of and impracticability of getting houses, the disturbed condition of affairs, and the general disorganization of affairs when we commenced."

3. "They have, in their moral obligations."

## VII. *Domestic Relations.*—1. How have the people observed the social and family relations ?

Better than was expected. Parents sometimes manifest a singular disregard as to what becomes of their children; but what more can be expected, when the parentage of the children is a matter of great uncertainty, as it is in African circles? People who are living as husband and wife, seem to be tolerably faithful to each other, and those on plantations near posts have, in many instances, been lawfully married.

Helena.—"They have not shown due regard for the family and social relations."

2. Have those living together as husband and wife, been instructed as to the duty of marriage, as required by the Order of the War Department?

In almost all instances—No.

Helena.—"They have."

3. If so, with what effect ?

Not having been instructed, there is no effect to talk about.

Helena.—"With good effect."

4. What regard for truth and for the rights of property have your laborers shown ?

5. What improvement can you report in these respects under your tuition ?

The planters answer to these two questions,—that the negroes generally *will* lie and steal, and that they will improve as they are better educated and taught. They recognize the lamentable influence of slavery on the morals of the negro, and sometimes say, it is no wonder that they learned to steal what should have been given them, and lied to screen themselves from barbarous punishment.

Helena.—4. "Some very great; majority, very little."

5. "Very substantial improvement."

6. Are the people generally disposed to remain on the plantations, or to roam abroad ?

Under good treatment, and when secure from guerrillas, they cheerfully remain; but on exposed plantations they are restless and uneasy.

Helena.—“As a rule, they are now disposed to remain.”

VIII. 1. Is there any manifest improvement in their disposition to labor steadily, as the season advanced, and as they received compensation?

(See answers to 4, 6 and 9, under “Work.”)

Helena.—“There is.”

2. How do the mixed and unmixed races compare as laborers?

The unmixed are better dispositioned and better workers, owing, it is supposed, to the fact that they have none of the chivalric blood of the South in their veins.

Helena.—“There is no difference.”

3. In the present disturbed state of the country do you believe that the highest interests of the negro and his employer can be secured without military organization and instrumentalities?

They do *not*.

Helena.—“They *cannot*.”

4. Ought lessees of plantations who treat their laborers cruelly, to be suffered to renew their leases?

Helena.—“They ought not.”

#### SUGGESTIONS OF HELENA PLANTERS.

The planters near Helena conclude their joint replies by the following observations:—“Since the above questions evince a desire, on your part, not only to ascertain the true condition of the negroes, and the success of working them under the present system, but also a desire to improve upon that system; we take the liberty to suggest some of the defects which our practical experience has discovered, and how we think they can be remedied.

“*First*—There should be a tangible power to compel all parties to fulfil their contracts. This power would be properly lodged in a Provost Marshal, (contemplated in the regulations, but which we never had,) whose duty it should be to visit from plantation to plantation, with authority to correct any and all abuses practised either by lessees or Freedmen; to compel laborers to render service; to decide upon all cases of minor importance; and to enforce discipline and order. This officer should be accompanied by a physician, who should minister to the sick, inspect negro quarters, and determine who should be exempt from labor on account of sickness. This last officer has become a necessity, from the difficulty of procuring medical attendance when needed, from the want of adequate means to compel the negroes to keep their quarters clean, and because

many laborers feign sickness, to their own positive injury and the detriment of all parties. These officers should, above all, be *just men*, and *business men*; and should be accompanied by a guard of two or four mounted men, who would serve as body guard, and enable the officers at all times to execute their orders with certainty and despatch. They should visit the plantations, because in the present condition of things, the presence of power is required, and all abuses should be corrected on the spot, to show the existence of moral and physical power. If, therefore, officers appointed for these purposes, and clothed with these or similar powers, remain five or ten miles distant from the homes of the negroes, and their places of labor, they are of no practical benefit.

"With a system of this kind, both the negro and the lessee will be secure,—the former from all impositions and evil practices of the latter; and the latter of something like the just and faithful services of the former. With it, we think a good crop of cotton can be made, which will bring a large revenue to the Government, and at the same time secure the highest interests of all parties.

"*Second*—We should have a settled, definite and efficient system of protection. A few men can, on account of the geography of the country, protect all the land that can be worked by the labor now to be obtained.

#### REMARKS OF MR. LANDON.

Mr. M. D. Landon, a lessee in the Helena District, remarks:

"During the cropping time of 1864 I have employed from fifty to one hundred Freedmen; have furnished medicines and medical attendance gratis; and have furnished the following articles of food at 15 per cent. advance on Cincinnati prices:—bacon, meal, flour, pork, mackerel, sugar, molasses and coffee. Clothing has been furnished to my employees at Cincinnati prices. They have been paid as follows:—women, \$16 per month; men, \$25 per month; boys, \$20 per month, up to November 1st. Since that time they have been paid by the pound, receiving \$1 25 per hundred for seed cotton.

"I have had no school, because the number of children (three or four) would not warrant it.

"If labor is paid well, it will work well; if paid poorly, the result will be the reverse."

#### HINDERANCES TO SUCCESS.

Col. Thomas adds remarks, explanatory and statistical, from which I make extracts:

"The early part of the season was very dry; the planters did not get the crop in the ground before April; and the bad seed they were compelled to plant made a replanting necessary for large portions. There were many other drawbacks and discouragements, as the planters were men not accustomed to the business. Freedmen were not paid during the year, but furnished with food and clothing, in accordance with the terms

of the order. This was hard for the negroes to understand, as they wanted pay for their work as fast as they did it. The clause of the order compelling them to wait for their money till the end of the season, was adopted to prevent their leaving a place after contracting to work on it. Many of the lessees, in the beginning of the year, adopted too severe a mode of government for the hands, savoring of the old system ; and the result has been a failure on their part to secure either the labor or the good will of the people under their charge. The wiser planters have adopted a system of rewards for faithfulness and industry, and have aimed to stimulate them to exertion through their love of approbation, and by their extra pay, rather than through fear.

#### THE ARMY WORM.

"About the 1st of September, the army worm attacked the cotton crop in the Valley, and nearly swept it away. It was very discouraging to the planters. After braving all the perils of guerrilla warfare ; after months of hard work ; and after being at great expense in furnishing supplies under vexatious trade regulations ; it was hard to see the whole crop snatched away, just as the dazzling dream of immense wealth began to look probable and real.

#### PARSIMONY OF PLANTERS.

"This, of course, had its effect upon the prospects of the Freedmen. The planters naturally became more close with the negroes, and it required more vigilance on the part of the Provost Marshal of Freedmen, to secure the blacks justice. Many planters, feeling that they would not want the labors of Freedmen any more this year, commenced trying to drive them into the camps by all the machinery of scanty rations, guerrilla scares, quarrels, etc. The clause in their contract requiring them to keep their employees until the 1st of January, 1865, was forgotten in an instant.

"The necessity of some action, to prevent these impositions upon the negro, and disobedience to the orders of the Government, becoming great, a Circular was issued from this office, calling the attention of planters to the clause referred to, and informing them that they would be *compelled* to live up to their agreement. This had the desired effect, although some of the meaner sort still try to practise the old game."

The necessity of this became apparent, for the whole field ; and was so extended. Col. Thomas continues :

"This labor on plantations has required a greater number of hands than formerly. For various reasons they do not do as much work, in proportion to their number, as under the old slave system. All the able-bodied men are in the army ; and the disturbed condition of the country fills the minds of these old men, women and half-grown children with apprehension. These two causes are sufficient to account for the decrease in the efficiency of labor.

"All people now coming in from plantations are sent to Davis Bend;

and arrangements are made to charge planters with rations issued to such people, from the time they arrive till the 1st of January, 1865.

#### MONEY PAID TO FREEDMEN.

"The actual amount of money paid to these people, by planters, will be small, as the clause in Orders 9, requiring planters to furnish clothing, was, unfortunately, cut out; and at the rates paid for clothing, it takes about all the negro can earn to settle his bills. This has led to discouragement; as it is impossible for him to reason about such matters. He looks only at results. He sees that the white man has received his labor, and has paid him with food and clothing,—about the same he used to get.

"To give you an idea of the plantation labor performed by Freedmen this year, I have compiled the following statistics:

Number of plantations.....	162
Number of acres in cultivation.....	74,981
Average number of acres to plantation.....	463

Of this amount fully one-third was abandoned by the planters, on account of the scarcity of labor, leaving about 40,000 acres fully cultivated. On these plantations there were 9,192 Freedmen employed, who, with their families, make an aggregate of about 17,500 people, living on the farms of this District. We expected, confidently, about 40,000 bales of cotton as the result of this season's labor; but the army worm, as before stated, has probably reduced the amount to about 8,000 bales."

#### CULTIVATION IN ARKANSAS.

Major Sargent generalizes as follows:

"No. of plantations worked, about 100.

No of acres in cultivation, 50,270.

Some few of the plantations first taken were abandoned, but were subsequently taken by others.

"The demand for plantation labor has been greater than could be answered, even after removing all blacks from Island 10, and securing others from Memphis. The wiser planters held out extra inducements by way of rewarding industry, by promising a bale of cotton or suit of clothes, etc. Unluckily, the army worm appeared and nearly ruined the crops; enough was saved, however, as a general thing, to pay expenses and stimulate the planter to try again. At this time, all the present hands who desire to work are engaged for another year; the lessees being anxious to secure their services.

"The wages of Freedmen will be paid. Money and clothing have been furnished from time to time, not generally to exceed one-half their earnings, and the remainder secured by bonds or cash deposited in the hands of my Superintendents, to be paid over when they adjust the indebtedness still existing.

"Many of the lessees, connected with planting, were discharged army officers."

## PRESIDENT'S ISLAND.

As before stated, this Supervision hoped to see a large number of negro planters using their own capital, or aided by benevolence or by the Government.

President's Island, below Memphis, originally occupied at the suggestion of Gen. Grant, and by Gen. Hurlbut's order, was taken away from our control, and public interest sacrificed to private. Our hopes with respect to it were vain. Gen. Dana has, however, again opened this opportunity to the people, by the following Order; and we anticipate much for the coming year.

HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI,  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, Dec. 17, 1864.

## SPECIAL ORDERS No. 10, Paragraph 8.

\* \* \* \* \*

The exigencies of the service rendering it absolutely indispensable, President's Island, in the Mississippi river below Memphis, Tennessee, is hereby reserved and set apart for the purposes of the Freedmen's Department, and is placed under the exclusive control of Col. JOHN EATON, Jr., General Superintendent of Freedmen, and such officers as he may place in charge of camps, farms, mills or other interests.

All white persons not directly connected with the military service will be required to leave the Island before the first day of January, 1865, and after that date no white person will be allowed to land on any part of the same without written permission so to do, either from these Head-Quarters, the Head-Quarters District of West Tennessee, the General Superintendent of Freedmen, or the Provost Marshal General of Freedmen, and none other.

\* \* \* \* \*

By order of Major General N. J. T. DANA.

T. H. HARRIS,  
*Assistanl Adjutant General.*

## COLORED CULTIVATORS AT HELENA.

Near Helena, the amount and safety of abandoned lands were such as to lead me to instruct the Superintendent to secure a large interest to the negroes as independent planters. Some forty thousand dollars are reported as the aggregate income of the colored lessees. But the number of lessees, and the amount of their income, would have been much greater, had my instructions been in no way thwarted. The parties so greatly in opposition in the Spring are now fully co-operative.

## COLORED CULTIVATORS—DISTRICT OF VICKSBURG.

Col. Thomas observes: "Many negroes leased small pieces of land from the Treasury Department, in the Spring, and have worked through the year with good success. They had to gather up their stock, material, &c., from abandoned plantations near them, and depend upon various sources for food for themselves and their hands. Many have made arrangements with parties in Vicksburg for such aid, binding themselves to

deliver a portion of their crop at the end of the year to settle the debt. As a general thing, this has not been advantageous to the negro; but where injustice was glaring, I have interfered and made arrangements to pay with the crop the actual fair value of the debt incurred.

"Some of the negroes had money at the end of last year, and have been able to pay for their supplies as they went along. These, of course, have done well. They make more money than the white lessee, when they are placed on the same footing. Their wants are simple and easily supplied; they have no expensive vices; they do full work themselves; and being of the same race with those they hire, succeed in getting good and steady work out of them.

"Those lessees, who have drawn their supplies from the Government, will succeed best, as they have received food at low rates, and have been credited. Thus they have avoided sacrificing their crops in advance to pay for their subsistence.

"They have all had trouble in shipping their cotton. As regulations would not allow them to sell here; and as they have no way of sending it North; they have had to appoint attorneys to attend to the business for them. They have not always succeeded in getting honest men to attend to it; but, with the care we have exercised in the matter, I feel that they have generally been secured in their rights. The plan now adopted for the shipment of cotton, through Mr. Spelman, if adopted some time ago, would have saved the people great loss in taxes, freight, fees, &c.

"The following are the statistics on this subject for my District. You will compare these statements of the doings of Negro lessees with those respecting white planters, presented above.

Number of Plantations,-----	180.
Acres under cultivation,-----	5,870.
Average No. of acres to Plantation,-----	32 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
Number of hands employed,-----	380.
and Population of about-----	1,500."

#### DAVIS BEND.

This is a rich section of alluvial land, twenty-five miles below Vicksburg, on the east side of the Mississippi, enclosed in a huge bend of the river, as it turns from its onward course westward, and rounds to the eastward, running some twenty-eight miles, and leaving a neck about seven hundred yards wide to join the peninsula thus formed to the mainland of the State of Mississippi. It was noted, before the rebellion, as the place where once resided General Quitman, Jeff. Davis and his brother Joe. The latter was a man of wealth. His plantation had a hospital, jail, a system of classification of hands, and a kind of negro judiciary for the trial of offences among his slaves. It was visited by foreigners, to get an idea of a model plantation, and of the institu-

tion in its most improved developement. He donated to his brother Jeff., from the east section of his domain, one thousand acres; where, according to the testimony of the inhabitants, some eighteen years ago Jeff. built for his residence the house now occupied by the teachers and officers.

#### GENERALS GRANT AND M'PHERSON.—DERANGEMENT.

There are about nine thousand acres in the Bend; seven thousand under cultivation. Gen. Grant, busy with the seige of Vicksburg, foreseeing the future, proposed that this Bend should be occupied by the freedmen, and if possible "become a negro paradise." Gen. McPherson ordered its occupation. This was commenced by Col. Thomas. When the derangement, before noticed, occurred, through the Treasury Department, the Quitman and Turner property was allowed, without the responsibility of this supervision, to go to heirs, who took the oath, but confirmed it only by disloyal acts. The Plantation Agents also leased land so as to exclude the negroes from the benefit of a large portion of the Joe Davis lands. With these disadvantages, and the spring already advanced into April, Col. Thomas resumed control under the order of the Secretary of War, issued by Adjutant General Thomas, directed to me. The order was intended to restore the land to the purpose for which we had occupied it. But coming so late, all work having been stopped after hundreds of acres had been plowed, and other general preparations considerably advanced, the negroes lost confidence. The encroachments of private parties, by leasing from Plantation Agents, also increased the restriction of the freedmen.

#### TIME LOST.—ARRANGEMENTS.

Col. Thomas, who gave himself most earnestly to the reduction of these difficulties, reports ;—

" Many of the objections to the present plan of operations could have been obviated, had more time been given for maturing plans, getting men to fill important places, and gathering material to work with. The land was immediately divided between about seventy of the best negroes, giving to each an average of over thirty acres. Mules, tools, &c., were let out to each; most of which property was gathered up by the negroes from deserted plantations in rebeldom. The negro who took a piece of land, took with his family as many of his fellow servants as he thought he would need. The object was, to furnish every thing necessary through the Gov-

ernment, charge to the recipients, and receive payment from them at the end of the year.

#### COLORED PEOPLE'S WORK.

"The people entered upon the work earnestly, laboring early and late, with an energy, industry, and close calculation of results that was hardly expected of them. Over two thousand acres were planted in cotton, corn and vegetables, and steadily worked through the season. The Provost Marshal heard complaints, settled disputes, saw that the rights of all were respected, the guilty punished, the idle made to work, and the old and sick taken care of.

#### RESULTS OF THEIR WORK.

"About the middle of August, their cotton was in fine condition, with a good prospect of a thousand bales. But the army worm visited this favored locality, and was as successful in spoiling this prospect as on plantations elsewhere. This had a discouraging effect on the planters, as, instead of being so prosperous as they had imagined, they would hardly have enough to pay their bills and start fair next season. The colony has raised one hundred and thirty bales, and has them ready for shipment. This will pay off each one's indebtedness, and leave him from \$500 to \$2500 for his year's work. They have corn and vegetables enough to last them through the winter, and keep their stock until the grass grows in the Spring. They have this season put up comfortable houses, and have many of the comforts of life around them. They have fought the difficulties of the year, and feel stronger for the efforts they must make for the next. They have learned lessons they will never forget, and their experience will be worth much to them hereafter. The success of the plan has induced Major General Dana to issue the following order, devoting the whole peninsula to such purposes:"

HEAD-QUARTERS, 16TH ARMY CORPS,  
VICKSBURG, Miss., November 5th, 1864.

SPECIAL ORDERS, No. 120, Paragraph 2.

The following order, which, for some unknown reason, has been disregarded during the past season, is now reiterated and will be strictly enforced:

NATCHEZ, Miss., March 28, 1864.

SPECIAL ORDERS, No. 15. [Extract:]

All the property in the Palmyra Bend, Miss., except the Turner and Quitman plantations, is hereby reserved for military purposes, on which will be established a "Home Farm," and to furnish land for Freedmen for their own cultivation. The General Superintendent of Freedmen will have entire control, under the proper military authorities.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

(Signed,) L. THOMAS,

Adjutant General.

The exceptions made in the Order above, will no longer be regarded, and the whole peninsula known as Davis Bend, including the three islands known as "Hurricane," "Palmyra," and "Big Black," is reserved

for military purposes, and will be exclusively devoted to the colonization, residence and support of Freedmen.

The limits described will easily support not less than twenty-five thousand of that class, who are now more or less dependent on the Government; and, as the place is garrisoned and defended with that intention, it will no longer be suffered to be used for private profit, whilst destitute colored people are wandering as vagrants through the streets of towns, are huddled in localities exposed to inroads from the enemy, and are fed on Government rations.

Davis Bend is perfectly secured against attack and rebel raids; it is the natural home of the destitute and needy contraband, where his labor will be easily and richly rewarded under sure protection. It was never intended that this security should be afforded, at a high cost to the Government, under pretence of providing a "Freedman's Home," in order that three or four *fortunate* persons should be favored with Leases of plantations in so desirable a locality.

The home of Jefferson Davis is a suitable place to furnish the means of support and security for the unfortunate race he is being so instrumental in oppressing.

All white persons not connected with the military service will be required to leave the above limits before the first day of January, 1865, and after that date no white person will be allowed to land on any part of the same without written permission so to do, either from these Head-Quarters, the Head-Quarters District of Vicksburg, the General Superintendent of Freedmen or the Provost Marshal General-of Freedmen.

Col. Samuel Thomas, 64th U. S. Colored Infantry, Provost Marshal General of Freedmen, under direction of Col. John Eaton, jr., General Superintendent of Freedmen, is charged with the execution of this order, and the 64th U. S. Colored Infantry is at their disposal for the objects thereof.

BY ORDER OF MAJOR GENERAL N. J. T. DANA:

T. H. HARRIS,  
Lieut. Col. and Ass't Adj't Gen'l.

"The clause of the General's order saying, that for some cause the order of the Honorable the Secretary of War has been disregarded, refers to a portion of the lands leased by the Treasury Department, before the issue of the order, to private parties, who had expended a large sum of money and made some improvements on the land. The General Superintendent thought, owing to this fact, and the lateness of the season when the order was issued, as well as the small amount of material at our disposal to carry out the project, that it was not best to interfere with these parties.

"The success of this enterprise has created quite a desire, on the part of the colored people in this city to go into such a colony next year. The more intelligent part of the Negro population are beginning to see the immense advantages of such a scheme, and are engaged in organizing a colony, which proposes to take at least one thousand acres, divide it on the plan adopted this year, build their houses, secure the land for one year certainly, and, if possible, a sure vested title to it. The project promises success, and if carried out will be done by Negroes entirely, under the direction of the proper authorities.

"Besides the colony spoken of previously, there are now, on Davis Bend, many *destitute* people, who have been supplied with rations by, and have done some work for, the Government."

## PLANTATION AGENT'S FARM AT NATCHEZ.

In caring for the dependent, I may observe, in addition to the various statements above, that we have received no aid from Plantation Agents. Had they accomplished what they proposed, we should have been free from any such care. The only attempt made by them was at Natchez. There they occupied the only opportunity for dependent labor; but drew to the plantation from the freedmen village for the dependent, chiefly of such as might have found labor for pay with private parties, and prevented any other effort for self-support by cultivation of lands on the part of those who remained.

Soon they found all of their Commissary, Quartermaster and Medical supplies must come from the army; and they had neither forms of business to correspond to, nor officers to manage it. The sanitary condition of this so-called home was condemned by the Medical Director of Freedmen at the time of his first visit. The Plantation Agents, seeing the inexpediency of managing this business by any other than military instrumentalities, began early to ask my officers to assume charge. These officers found public so mixed up with private interests there, that they declined the responsibility, until peremptorily ordered by Gen. Brayman to assume it. Lt. Col. Mitchell reported that Government mules, wagons and rations had been used for the benefit of private parties.

## SCARCITY OF LAND LEFT FOR FREEDMEN.

From Lake Providence to Vicksburg, embracing a river line of something over fifty miles, it was found that these Agents, when my officers were called upon to care for the poor, had leased every plantation and house, leaving neither an acre of soil, nor a cabin for the dependent of the entire laboring population.

Against all these difficulties, and the lateness of the season, it will be seen, from several statements of my Assistants, that the system adopted for the support of paupers, would have rendered them not only self-supporting, but profitable to the Government, had not the army worm appeared. Notwithstanding this destruction of the crop, it is believed that the settlement of the accounts of the home at Pine Bluff will show an increase to the Government.

## THE TESTIMONY OF FREEDMEN.

The generalization of the testimony of planters is naturally followed by a synopsis of the statements gathered from the Freedmen. The visitation of a considerable portion of the plantations, by any of my assistants, was known to be especially hazardous; and the taking of the testimony of the freed people, in any form available for use, peculiarly difficult. Rev. A. S. Fiske, of known courage, unyielding integrity, and of large experience among the people, was selected to take this testimony. Being familiar with all the discriminations necessary to be made in noting their evidence, he has successfully accomplished the difficult task, as will be seen by his condensed Report, here introduced.

## INSPECTION BY CHAPLAIN FISK.

MEMPHIS, TENN., DEC. 8th, 1864.

LIEUT. JOHN F. PERRY,

## ADJUTANT FREEDMEN'S DEPARTMENT:

I have the honor to submit the following report of an inspection of plantations, undertaken in obedience to Special Orders No. 80, from your office.

## NUMBER OF PLANTATIONS.

The inspection has covered ninety-five places leased by whites, and fifty-six plats of land worked by the blacks for themselves, in the Districts of Natchez, Vicksburg and Helena. In these Districts, I have left but few accessible places without examination; perhaps twenty in all. Little Rock and Pine Bluff were not visited, as letters from your office indicated that your reports would not admit the necessary delay.

Immediately, on receipt of orders assigning to myself the duty of this inspection, I repaired to Vicksburg, and thence, by Col. Thomas' suggestion, to Natchez, where there are twenty-one places, out of the one hundred leased, which, in some sense, can be said to have been cultivated during the greater portion of the season—most of them under control of a single cabal of men, who either are, or have been, in the position of official control of plantations. Three of these plantations I was unable to visit, as, just then they were in actual occupation by guerrillas.

In the Vicksburg District I found and examined the condition of sixty-four places leased by whites, and left without examination perhaps a dozen besides. Three hundred and twelve leases were held in June.

At Helena, actual inspection was made of ten places, leaving some half-dozen. Yet I was able to get reliable information from them all.

In the Memphis District there are, properly, no plantations in cultivation.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

Answers to the questions, propounded to the Freedmen by direction of your office, may be analyzed as follows. Specifications of each plantation are herewith submitted:

I. *Food.*—1. Articles of food received from employers?

*Ans.*—All the articles specified as component parts of Freedmen's ration (Order No. 4, L. Thomas,) have been issued to the laborers

on plantations,-----	10.
Pork, meal (or flour) and salt, on plantations,-----	95.
Molasses (or sugar) on plantations,-----	82.

## 2. Amount of each article?

<i>Ans.</i> —Full ration in <i>all articles</i> on plantations,-----	10.
"    "    of salt    "    "    -----	95.
"    "    meal (or flour)    "    "    -----	80.
"    "    molasses (or sugar)    "    "    -----	51.
Half ration of molasses    "    "    -----	38.
Part    "    "    meat    "    "    -----	85.

## 3. Supply of children, infirm and dependent?

<i>Ans.</i> —By employers, on plantations,-----	37.
By laborers (in part or wholly) on plantations,-----	58.

## 4. Have the rations of the sick been stopped?

<i>Ans.</i> —No, on plantations,-----	56.
Yes, (in whole or in part) on plantations,-----	39.
More or less of Sanitary supplies on plantations,----	18.

II. *Clothing.*—1. What kind of clothing has been furnished by employers?

*Ans.*—Putting this and the last clause of the next question together—The needed variety and amounts—

on plantations,-----	70.
Less than the needed variety and amounts,-----	25.

2. At what *price* has clothing been furnished?

<i>Ans.</i> —At cost, with expense of freight, on plantations,-----	19.
At from 10 to 25 per cent. advance, "    "    "    -----	76.

## 3. How have children, sick and infirm, and old been supplied with clothing?

*Ans.*—By laborers, or not at all, on every plantation; and their liberality has been praiseworthy.

## 4. Gewgaws and trinkets?

*Ans.*—There seems to have been little or no business done in this line.

III. *Work.*—1. How many hours per diem have you worked?

*Ans.*—It is hardly possible to make an analysis of the multitudinous and uncertain answers to this question. On some places, the attempt has been made to get the full ten hours, seldom succeeding with any considerable number of hands. On other places, the effort has not been strenuous on the number of hours, but expended in the endeavor to get a day's work done in whatever number of hours the blacks chose to work. I should not judge that the laborers had averaged beyond eight hours per day.

## 2. How many days per week?

*Ans.*—It is about as difficult to answer this as the former question. On some places, the average would probably come as high as four and one-half or five days' work from each person who professed to work that week. Many individuals have made their five and one-half days per week for successive weeks. But many, on the contrary, have worked most irregularly. Five and a half days in any week, have been credited a full week on thirty-four plantations. Not so credited on the remaining sixty-one.

## 3. Treatment from white men on plantations?

*Ans.*—No complaint was made in forty-eight cases. On the remaining forty-seven plantations there was complaint of rough, or profane, or obscene, or insulting usage; while blows and kicks have been not infrequently administered on some; mainly, I am happy to say, by the old Southern overseers. A certain roughness and severity of manner, however, has been used, foolishly, on almost all plantations.

## 4. Have you worked in rainy or stormy weather?

*Ans.*—No: except under cover. But the laborers have lost time and wages for it on sixty-six plantations. Rainy weather has been credited on twenty-nine plantations only—making a most serious reduction of monthly wages.

## IV. Wages.—1. How much pay have you received during the year for your work?

*Ans.*—As an average, not enough, beyond the current necessities of selves and dependents for clothing, to provide them comfortable apparel for winter. Of course the amounts vary on different places and with different places and with different persons. This most forlorn result of a season's labor is referable to the combination of a number of causes.

1st. The loss of time, resulting from guerrilla incursions, or the fear of them; which loss is borne by the laborer (except in two honorable instances—those of Mr. John S. Harris and Maj. John Lynch); and which has commonly been the loss of both wages and rations.

2. To the loss of rainy weather and Saturday afternoons, and by sickness.

3. To the loss of time from indisposition to labor steadily.

4. To the destitution of clothing in which many of them came to the plantations, and the necessity for the purchase of cooking utensils.

5. To the very rigid economy in which the planters justify themselves by the partial failure of the cotton crop. Many of them have even proposed to stop rations and wages as soon as the crop was out. Many

have, as seen already by reference to 1. 3 and 4 above, compelled the laborers to support dependents and the sick. Perhaps the following calculation may make the matter clearer:

#### ESTIMATE OF AVERAGE RESULTS OF LABOR.

The laborers, taken together, will have begun work about March 1st.

CR.

Ten months labor at \$10 per month of 26 working days..	\$100 00
	DR.
Saturday afternoons lost, 43 half days, 21½ days.....	\$ 8 25
Rainy weather " 49 days.....	15 00
Sickness, time " 13 " .....	5 00
Odd days lost through disinclination to work, 13.....	5 00
Time lost by fear of guerrillas, 13 days.....	5 00
Total balance of credit for the year.....	61 75

A man will require these goods, viz: two pairs shoes, \$5; 1 pair shirts, \$5; 2 pairs pants, \$6; straw and felt hat, \$2; 2 cotton handkerchiefs, \$1 50; 2 pairs socks, \$1 50; 1 coat, \$4; suspenders or jack knife, \$1. He will be sure to expend \$5 for tobacco. (I have examined the accounts of some who had chewed up, in this weed, during the season, \$20. They would prefer being short of food, rather than out of tobacco.) And for tea, sugar, soap, candles and sanitary extras, say \$5. Total \$36. Leaving a credit for cash payment of \$25 75, on condition that your circular ensures the payment of wages and rations to Dec. 31st. But in the Vicksburg District, at any rate, it will not do that, as the plantations are all broken up by the withdrawal of garrisons from the protecting posts. So there is the loss of December wages, \$10, leaving the balance due in cash of \$15 75—supposing that he has no children or infirm persons dependent upon him. But suppose he *has* these; or, that being unaccustomed to accounts and untrained to thrift, he has drawn goods carelessly, or, bought a ten dollar coat and a five dollar pair of boots—not magnificent, indeed, in these days; but where will he find defense against the severities of winter; or, against the wolf's approach to his door before the end of the first unemployed month?

Take a woman's wages:

CR.

Ten months work at \$7.....	\$70 00
	DR.
Loss of time, Saturday afternoons, 1 month.....	\$ 7 00
" " " Rainy weather, 1½ " .....	10 50
Sickness of self and family, time lost 1 month.....	7 00
Guerrillas, time lost on account of, ½ month.....	3 50
Odd days for various or no reasons, ½ month.....	3 50
Total balance of credits.....	38 50

But a woman will require, say two dresses, \$8; under garments, \$5; two pairs shoes, \$5; hose, \$2; handkerchiefs, \$1 50; hat, \$2; and she will expend \$3 for tobacco and snuff, and call it *necessary*, as it *is* her only

luxury when well, and \$3 more for tea, sugar, &c., when she is sick. Total Dr. \$29 50 of not extravagant expenditure. Total cash balance \$9. I have set the figures for goods *under* the average prices, and certainly have not overrated the amount of goods required for ten months. If the woman be ordinarily well, and have no fraud practised on her, and have no children, she will get scanty rations, poor shelter and clothes, and *nine dollars*, for her year's work in the cotton field! But suppose she *has* a child—and black women *do* have children, what then? Suppose the rebels took off the first suit of clothing she bought, as they did from many, so that she was compelled to buy afresh, what then? Suppose fraud to have been practised toward her; or, in sickness, her ration charged her; or, that she has been compelled to pay for the rations her children ate, what then? The balance due from the laborer to the employer cannot well be collected: that is a mercy!

On one place, the manager told me he did not know what to do about discharging his hands, they were so much in debt to him, and he had not paid them a dime of money; and was that hour having their quarters searched, in vain, on the pretense that they were killing his sheep. They had eaten them up *clean*, if they had stolen them.

The answer, then, to question 1st is—Food and clothing as they could get it.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO PROVOST MARSHALS.

I sincerely trust that your circular to Provost Marshals will correct these abuses, compelling planters to recast their accounts, so as, at any rate, to give wages for rainy weather and guerrilla-lost time; to commute, in cash, rations withholden from dependents; and to pay wages to the end of the year.

#### COMMENDABLE LIBERALITY.

Of course, the showings on different plantations differ widely. There are a very few places—not six—on which there has been no loss of time except for protracted sickness, the planter, by some generous construction, having been able to consider each failure to labor justifiable. On these the credits will stand, for men \$100, and for women \$70, diminished only by charges for clothing; leaving for cash payment \$64 and \$40.

Mr. G. R. Newman, an old slave owner, has not only given thus full time, but has given a suit of summer clothes to each of his hands, at an expense of more than \$400. Maj. John Lynch has distributed to his people, gratuitously, about \$700 worth of clothing, and given them full time; and, I will add, has spent time and labor in all ways to assist, and protect and encourage the blacks in his neighborhood. Some employers have given their faithful hands small plats of land to cultivate, at odd hours, for themselves. Some laborers have thus, selling cotton so raised to their employers, realized hundreds of dollars beyond their wages. In this respect the firm of Ayers and Taylor, of Helena, have been most liberal.

2. Have you received the amounts promised you from time to time?

*Ans.*—No; and for the best of reasons. First, most of the hands were hired on the promise of \$25 for men, and \$18 for women—finding their own rations. On no consultation with them, or consent of theirs, that promise was broken by authority above that of the Freedmen Department. They awoke one day to find that the employers' part of the contract was broken, but *their's* kept whole. Now, they were to get \$10 for men and \$7 for women, with \$3 a month commutation of clothing; making \$13 and \$10. Six planters only held to the former agreement. So, per force, they went on at work, for a time, under the new arrangement; when, lo! comes another breach of one side of the contract—the employers'—*theirs*, as valid as ever!—and the \$3 commutation for clothing is gone, leaving them to clothe themselves and families out of \$10 and \$7 per month.

For the rest, I think they *have* received in clothing the half of their monthly earnings, and so the amount finally, by the last order promised.

Some ten planters refused to take advantage of the last reduction in wages, and have paid the promised commutation.

3. Have you received medical attention and care while working the plantations?

*Ans.*—But very little. Sometimes, in severe sickness, the planters have hired medical officers from the nearest military posts, but have ordinarily depended upon the medical education of some old black woman, or upon the yet inferior experience of the overseer of the plantation.

A considerable number of medical practitioners were employed, early in the season, for the care of districts of plantations. Some half dozen of these were captured by guerrillas, and retained as prisoners, or brutally murdered.

4 and 5. Have there been schools, or encouragement to attend them, on plantations?

*Ans.*—No. On two places I found schools in operation. On three there were schools the first of the season. On one a black woman was teaching in a small way to the small advantage of any body. On one other place, the wife of the manager of the plantation had interested herself, and been very useful in teaching the children of the employees. On many—most indeed—schools would have been impossible. On the part of the greater number of the planters there does not appear to be any disposition to educate the blacks.

The above is as good an analysis as I can make of the answers of the Freedmen to the questions which you furnished.

#### PLANTATIONS, PEOPLE, CROPS.

The ninety-five plantations examined embrace 45,745 acres of land, said to be cultivated, giving an average of 418 acres to the plantation. They have produced about 4,800 bales of cotton, and perhaps 18,000 bush-

cls of corn. They have given labor and support to 8,588 people—about 90 people to a plantation. About twenty plantations I did not see. From some of them I hear good reports. Supposing them to average with those examined, we shall have

Total number of acres on which crops are made, 54,105.

"	"	"	bales cotton,	-----	5,910.
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"	"	"	people supported,	-----	10,388.
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#### DEPREDACTIONS.

These one hundred and fifteen plantations, together with fifty-six plats of land cultivated by blacks, are what I find remaining of the four hundred and fifty leases, more or less, which have been taken for the year. From the ninety-five safest of these plantations, on which cultivation has been prosecuted for the season, there have been taken by the rebels 2,314 head of serviceable stock, and 967 Blacks. (I learn that since the breaking up of the Post at Goodrich's and Milliken's, many more have been carried off.) The Blacks have been taken back into the interior of the States and resold into bondage. The mules have gone directly to the rebel service. Beside this plunder, they have carried off with them how much supplies, both in dry-goods and in food, it is impossible to do more than conjecture. Nor have I any means of ascertaining the amount of stock or the number of hands taken from that greatly larger outlying region, in which the planters have been utterly broken up, and their all lost; from which white and black alike fled for life, leaving behind them all things. Nor is it my sphere to recite the horrible details of atrocious murders, perpetrated upon both black and white, to which I have been a listener on many of these places. They out-do, in brutal ferocity, the barbarities of savage warfare. Nor is it possible to know what sums of money, or what amounts of goods, have sufficed to keep the marauders from certain thoroughly exposed but marvelously secure places; but there has been reason enough for the vigilance of military officers and commanders. Nor how thoroughly profitable it has been to these murderers and robbers, to suffer crops to be raised outside our protection altogether. It is matter of common report, that not a few planters have taken measures of one sort or another, to get the "good will" of those who could else have broken them up. Some have stated the fact to me plainly, and of others it has been freely said by their neighbors.

The above figures concerning land and crops, and stock, and laborers, I do not suppose to be accurate. Still I have a good deal of confidence in them as approximately correct. The planters have not, as a general thing, made their expenses; and the whole system of plantations is broken up by late military movements, except in the districts of Helena and Natchez; and the people are, before this, gathered in camps to be cared for by the Government.

#### BLACK LESSEES.

Your reports concerning this class will, doubtless, be full from other sources. It was in my way to observe them somewhat fully from Vicks-

burg to Helena. Their tracts of land ranged from five acres to one hundred and fifty. There are many instances in which a family contrives to get a good support from five acres, farmed with the hoe alone. Many of these add to their resources by cutting wood. I doubt if any of these five acre men have, for months, required or received any aid from the Government, or will ever require it in the future; unless by some great failure of administrative wisdom they should be hindered from procuring land. How numerous this class of cultivators is I cannot tell. There is a very considerable number between the Brown and Johnson place and the Young's Point plantation, into whose condition I enquired closely enough merely to make the foregoing statements. One old man I found, who had himself, with his hoe only, made ten acres of corn, on land newly cleared, and so a good year's wages. He had lately married a wife, and wants, next year, twenty-five acres; for, he says with pride, "She's a workin' woman, sah!" He ought to have the land. There is no reason why, under supervision, this whole bend, from Young's upon the upper side, to Brown and Johnson's upon the lower, may not be successfully tilled by the blacks, in such a way as to remove the support of the people entirely from the shoulders of the Government, and to create a very considerable revenue; while the whole labor will be within the limits of an easily secured safety. The people, too, will be accessible to all moral, religious and intellectual instruction.

In the districts above, the tracts of land occupied by the blacks are larger. Of the whole fifty-six of these small agriculturists there is not one, whom I have seen, who has not made enough to keep him comfortably alive through the winter; while most of them have gotten together teams and agricultural implements, and such sums of money as will start them upon the next year's work at great advantage. The most successful of them all, this year, has been Robert Miner, opposite Milliken's Bend. He cultivated eighty acres in cotton, making forty bales of that valuable fibre, one half bale to the acre,—the best crop I have seen in my whole tour. He made, also, forty acres of good corn. In the Helena district a number of these men sold their crops, standing, before the worm appeared—they themselves getting out the crops at certain wages.

One man sold his forty acres for-----	\$8,000
Another    "    twenty-four acres for-----	6,000
"    "    thirty      "      -----	5,000
"    "    thirteen     "      -----	4,000
"    "    twenty-five    "      -----	4,000

Of the rest, most sold their crops in the seed at from 28 to 33 cents per pound, and have made, on ten acres, not far from an average of \$500, beside their support, and about the same, proportionately, on larger tracts. Many of them had funds from the industry of last year; some borrowed small sums which, in every instance but one, so far as I could find, have been punctually repaid.

I cannot see that, in any particular, these colored men have been less successful than the white planters alongside them. Where they have employed hands, there is little, if any, complaint against them, either in the

matter of rations, wages, or usage. Having undertaken small and manageable tracts of land, working them in good part themselves, and employing but a small number of hands; their crops have been more fully worked, and so have produced more bountifully. Some of them, from small wood-yards, have made the whole expenses of their enterprize. Many of them, during the winter, will be making money in the same way. All of these are eager for the privilege of cultivating for themselves another year. The worm, of course, has taken the greater portion of their expected profits this season. Perhaps, however, they have made as much as was best for them, this the second year of their liberty. Hereafter, they will be better fitted to manage wisely larger profits.

One large plantation is leased by a firm—one white and two blacks. "It was so nominated in the bond;" but the blacks have furnished most of the capital, and that came near being their profit in it. I do not think co-partnerships between white and black men are prudent.

#### SMALL FARMS BETTER.

It will not be wise to lease to these men *large tracts* of land; but to all such as have proved prudent and trustworthy, such land as themselves and families, with at most two or three assistants each, can till. Indeed, large tracts of land ought not to be leased to white or black. Planters have all over-reached themselves. They have planted great tracts for abandonment. They have spread themselves over two, three, thirteen huge plantations, putting neighbors at a great distance, isolating themselves, making defense impossible; keeping great, unmanageable, mixed troops of laborers; massing at isolated and indefensible points scores of mules and great stores of valuable supplies; insomuch that the rebels have not been willing to break the thing up entirely, when they might, for the depot of supply it furnished for the mere trouble of riding to it.

Small tracts of land, necessitating a closely settled population for purposes of defense, and dispensing with great stores of supplies for easy rebel seizure, is the only way to secure an occupancy of territory, which will be of any service. Planters themselves are unanimous in the conviction that they have contributed to their own misfortunes by the too magnificent extent of territory they have attempted to cover.

#### GARDENS.

It was designed by the authorities, that small guarden plats should be assigned to each family of the laborers. Some of the planters have complied with that design. Yet such consideration of the comfort of the laborers has availed them little; as the soldiers of the neighboring garrisons have been deterred, neither by discipline nor principle, from appropriating the entire product of their labor. The same impossibility has stood in the way of their raising poultry or pigs; privileges from which, in the olden time, they derived no small advantage. It is doubtful whether, on the whole, they have lived more bountifully than on well-managed plantations in the past.

## EDUCATION.

In reference to Educational interests, the plantations are not favorable. Many of them are so much exposed, that to attempt to locate teachers upon them would be rashness. Not a few of the planters utterly scout the idea of education. The cultivation of plantations is a mere temporary, speculative venture. The whole spirit of such operations is fatally opposed to these plans for the culture and elevation of the laborers.

Of religious instruction, they have had none.

Of moral instruction, with rare exceptions, none.

Not even the plain and fundamental provisions, which, in all camps and towns, have been made for lawful marriage, have been regarded upon the farms.

I cannot find that any general effort has been made for the enlightenment of the people in any direction. In matters of prudence and economy, they often have not known the cost of the articles they bought. No wise, kind oversight has been had of their household affairs or modes of life. Of course there are exceptions to these sweeping negations; but no class of men, engaged in pushing their fortunes in hazardous ventures of this sort, will stop for educational or moral effort among the people. The experience of this year will be that of all years.

## LABOR.

Upon this point the testimonies of the planters are as various as their characters, and depend quite as much upon their own, as upon the disposition of their employees. For employers, who have succeeded in inspiring the blacks with confidence in their integrity and humanity, they have been willing to render faithful service. I do not remember an instance, where I have been regaled by the planter with complaints of the worthlessness of his hands, in which an examination of his hands did not reveal a most thorough lack of confidence in the integrity, or want of respect for the capacity, of the planter.

Of course there are differences in the value of these laborers. Those who have been most tossed about from camp to camp are least desirable. Those who have come from distant localities, and suffered great hardships meanwhile, are peculiarly liable to disease; are subject to an acclimating process; and so their efficiency as laborers decreased. They have undergone so many breakings-up as to have become unsettled, and, to a considerable extent, unsteady. The best laborers are, ordinarily, those who have remained quietly upon their old places, and there render their services, for hire, to new employers. Those on farms most remote from camps of soldiers or freed people, are most steady and serviceable. The older are likely to be worth more than the younger. Probably the majority of valuable male laborers are above forty-five years of age. The black man does not break down to unfitness for labor earlier, at any rate, than the white. Among the women, the most valuable laborers are from thirty to forty-five. I suppose the vices, of their former and of their present con-

dition, press more sorely upon the women than upon the men; and upon the younger than the middle-aged.

#### EFFECTS OF GUERRILLA OPERATIONS.

The whole matter of securing efficient labor upon these plantations has been confused by the perpetual fear, with which the situation has been encompassed. There is scarcely one of them all which has escaped guerrilla atrocities. The greater proportion of the whole number have been entirely and finally broken up; while upon the remainder every condition of contented labor has been broken. On a large number of these latter the crops have been cultivated, for months past, by partly or wholly new sets of hands—large numbers of the original laborers having been taken off. Panics and stampedes have been of continual occurrence. People and planters have fled for their lives, often leaving dead and captives behind them. Actual or apprehended attacks have deterred from labor for days and even weeks together; and kept the lessees themselves inside of fortified places for long intervals, in which they dared not show their faces upon their plantations. Many lessees have been captured—not a few murdered with all the circumstances of fiendish cruelty. The wonder is that the whole labor of these guerrilla-infested regions has not become demoralized and entirely worthless. My inspection took me to several places on which no stock had been kept for months, and over which roamed, at will, parties of from three to fifty of these marauders. One morning as I was riding to the York & Fletcher place, opposite Natchez, I met the body of Mr. Knight, pierced by ten balls, who was murdered the night before, on the place this side of that. Two other whites and one black beside were killed. A little further on we met the wounded blacks being brought in. One old man of seventy winters, with white hair and beard, and ghastly with blood, bore patiently three severe wounds.

Not unfrequently as we approached, on horseback, the negro quarters, we caught sight of the blacks scattering to the weeds like frightened hares—so timid have they become on these haunted grounds.

#### SEVERITY AND OLD OVERSEERS.

Many planters have considered that a course of severity was necessary to secure labor. Looking for “experience” in the management of blacks, and in the making of cotton, some of them have employed, as they should not, on any terms, have been allowed to do, old overseers. Many of these, in manners and morals, in their words and acts, have showed a thorough itching after, and an uncomfortable tendency toward, the old system. The lash has not been used in any case; blows, and kicks, and cuffs are not as uncommon as could be desired. There are but few of these overseers who know anything of the black, except as he cowers under the lash,—a thing owned and driven like an ox. Out of that condition they misunderstand him fatally.

As to the making of cotton, that has not been the overseer’s sphere.

He is to "manage the niggers." The crop and the making of it is better understood by the more intelligent of the latter than by him.

The old slave overseer ought to be laid aside. He is an appendage freedom *abhors*; he and all his manners. On most of the plantations a plan of roughness and harshness of manner has been purposely adopted, which will not be tolerated at all by laborers who have come into the full conception that they are free. The shallow mistake is made—that, too, by very sensible men, that this harsh, insulting manner carries with it some efficiency of a real authority. The mistake is gross. No people detect so infallibly the reality of a white man, under all his shows, as do these. The weight and dignity of a real authority has been vastly lessened, while the respect of the black man for himself and for us has been sadly weakened by it. A judicious plan of rewards and kindness has worked better, where it has been tried, than this weak show of tyranny and roughness. Confidence and respect will inspire labor. Some employers have so won that, that their people have chosen to leave their money in their hands to the end of the year, and have done them good work in spite of manifold discouragements.

#### MILITARY OVERSIGHT NEEDFUL.

Yet no one thing is made clearer, by the observation of many groups of laborers, than this: that the more constant oversight of a real authority is needful, both for the protection of the planter and that of the black. During the year now closing the provost marshals have been too few. Had half the places leased been continued under cultivation, it would have been impossible for the officers, charged with the protection and government of the laborers, to reach them effectually. Even with the work circumscribed by the operations of the guerrillas, the necessary amount of care could not be extended to the remaining places.

The complaints arising between planter and laborer are endless. The laborer is accused as lazy, as vicious, as impudent, as thievish or a liar, as quarrelsome, as a breeder of discontent. The planter is accused of keeping false time, overcharging for goods, giving short rations, refusing to feed dependents, neglecting the sick, severity, insults and blows. Half these complaints, on both sides, would be prevented by the knowledge that, if made, some competent authority would at once seek for their foundation, and apply the remedy.

Half the real causes of complaint would never occur, were the authority for appropriate correction at hand. In the absence of possible civil authority, the military authority must be very easily accessible, for the protection of the planter and his interests, by the removal or punishment of those who, fed, insist on being idle; those who are breeders of vice and discontent; and who commit offences against good order or good morals. The exercise of this authority is as essential to the education of the black, as to the protection of the planter. On the other hand, the protection and content of the laborer requires that this authority be constantly present, to enforce the issue of proper rations, the support of the dependent, the care of the sick, the keeping of true accounts of time and of goods, the

punctual payment of wages, and the correction of every abuse practised upon the laborer by his employer. The presence of military authority, in the person of a military Provost Marshal, is needed every week, on every plantation, both by planter and laborer; and the bare presence of such authority would accomplish most of the required results. Not only is the necessity evident to an observer, but felt and asserted, with *entire unanimity*, by both black and white. Some of the most intelligent of the planters have insisted, urgently, that if they cultivate next year, they will gladly pay the expense of an officer, and his guard of four or six mounted men, for every six to ten plantations—he being required to visit each plantation at least once in each week, and hear and adjust all complaints. I think this would be the unanimous wish of all who have worked lands this year; and certainly this is the crying need of the whole throng of laborers. For the prevention of injustice to them, they too could well afford to bear all the expense of this administration of justice. This year, the universal complaint is that the Provost Marshal districts have been too large, and the duty of the officers too much complicated with other affairs; so that neither of the interested parties could get easy access to him. His office should be in the saddle, and his court, the gallery of each plantation-house; while his guards should be at hand to enable him to execute his awards.

#### SETTLEMENTS AND MEDICAL ATTENDANCE.

The final settlements for this year, in accordance with your circular, are a matter of great importance, involving much labor of the Provost Marshal sort. The proper care of the sick, and charge of sanitary affairs, requires that each Provost Marshal District should have a Medical officer, who should be in control of all sanitary affairs on the plantations; who should use his authority, as in the military service, to carry out and compel the observance of his sanitary regulations, both by planter and laborer. This year it has been impossible for the plantations to reach medical assistance; and the planters have had no authority to keep the quarters or the persons of their laborers in good sanitary condition. As a consequence, great numbers have died. I have been on plantations where nearly half the people have died. The small-pox has prevailed very extensively. On one plantation, where about one hundred and twenty people were employed, there were forty-seven deaths previously to November 15th. Thirty-three of these were fifteen years or under; seven, sixty years or over; and seven, between fifteen and sixty.

Had my time been adequate, I would gladly have taken statistics upon these matters, but could not. I have merely made such observations and enquiries as my other objects permitted.

#### WAGES.

The compensation of labor is of capital importance in any view of the plantation system. My opinions, with reference to the plan of negroes purchasing their own supplies, have been completely changed by the observations made in these places. There were two reasons for thinking it

unwise to require the black to purchase his supplies :—1st. The opportunity it gave the white to steal from the black by overcharges. 2. The inducement it offered the black to steal from all colors, to reduce the expenses of living. But the chance for cheating in a book account is not one-tenth as great as in the issue of rations to the hands each week. By this plan, the laborer gets what he wants, and has a direct object in economy and the use of his spare hours in productive industry. When food is a part of the hire, then just that much of the wages is made every idle day ; which is unjust to the planter, and unfortunate to the black. Let his wages depend entirely on his work. Employers and laborers are alike decided and unanimous in their conviction in favor of this plan of supplies, with a corresponding increase of rate of compensation. The same desires are held in reference to supply of clothing. The proper supervision will obviate all difficulties. The employers should be required to furnish all needed supplies at cost, on plantation, letting their only profit from the laborer be his labor.

#### CHANGE OF RATES OF WAGES.

In February, authority in Freedmen's affairs passed from the Treasury Department into military hands, but not into control of the Freedmen Department. The plantation system had gone too far to be withdrawn. New regulations were adopted—better, in many respects, and safer than the former ; but making a change of wages. The new rates were \$13 and \$10 per month, and rations provided. It was hardly to be expected that the black would see the propriety of this change. But he had no remedy. Presently comes another change of terms. Three dollars per month are stricken from these rates, leaving the laborers to provide clothing from their earnings of \$10 and \$7 per month. About the equity of these two changes the blacks are still in doubt.

At the time of these changes, labor was frantically sought in all directions. Visions of fortunes were floating before all planters' eyes. The only trouble was scarcity of laborers. A quarter of a million of acres, more or less, are waiting to sprout fortunes under every stroke of the hoe. Planters would have paid forty and fifty dollars per month rather than not have had the hands. All men seemed mad. Guerrillas were a light matter; uncertainty of protection, nothing. Cotton seed and land to scatter it on, and blacks to gather in the golden fibre—and lo ! Golconda ! Planters were demanding, at the doors of every military office, that laborers should be driven, by force of steel or hunger, to their plantations. Then, too, the black man was the only one in whom was left a shred of reasonable prudence. He knew they wished to take him to regions, where neither liberty nor life were safe an hour ; and was unwilling to take such perils for such reward. ✓It is strange that where really involuntary labor, in peril of liberty and life, was so clamorously sought and confidently looked to as the certainty of dazzling fortunes to the speculators, wages were placed at what was a bare equivalent for food, clothes, and shelter. The fears of the blacks have been more than realized. The meanest show of all, is the evident endeavor of many of these adventurers, when the golden

dream was past, by every small economy to make the black laborer bear a heavy part of their losses.

It is sincerely to be hoped that, hereafter, labor may compete in the open market; that demand and supply shall regulate prices; and that liberality and justice, practised this year, may have the due advantage of their good repute among the laborers.

#### UNIFORM RATE OF WAGES UNJUST.

No uniform rate of wages is just. If supplies are furnished laborers and dependents, above the fixed rate, why then, the man with many dependants receives much more than he who has none. It is not just, that a man faithful, diligent, and efficient, should have no advantage over another who is worthless. Wages "ad valorem" must be the law.

#### PLANTING NEXT YEAR.

Any planting system next year, must be of small extent and importance. No sane man will lease again in the regions which have been abandoned this year. Yet to-day there are not fifty plantations, from Natchez to Columbus, on which any planter can stay himself, or retain or feed a laborer. But the little safe land inside, or close to military lines, must not be leased from underneath the feet of the blacks. Such a plan would give employment to a few blacks, leaving the mass of them on the hands of the Government still. The possible extent of the scheme is too narrow to make it a matter of any considerable importance to the Government.

#### WHO SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEASE?

Who should be allowed leases? Plainly no one of that carping grumbling throng of men, who have filled the air about every military officer's ears with the buzz of their curses; who have "waited," and "remonstrated," and "petitioned," and "appealed," and "protested" against the necessary stringency of military rules; and would have had all military operations devoted to the safety of their plantations and the making of their private fortunes; and who are angry with military authorities because they must have permits for goods to go *outside the lines*, and must have passes to get through the lines, and all that class of senseless nuisances. Not one of those who have secured the safety of their plantations by "understandings," and "interests," and "bonuses," with and to guerrillas, should touch an acre of land again. No man who has dealt unjustly in rations, in wages, in the keeping of time, or in the personal usage of their hands, should touch them again. No man, who sums up the result of his year's experience with the blacks in this too common formula—"Damn the nigger," should have the opportunity to get further experience of them.

Pardon the extreme length of this report. Brevity is a rare, and, in this case, a very difficult attainment.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

A. SEVERANCE FISK,

Assistant in Charge of Freedmen.

#### ANSWERS OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND PROVOST MARSHALS.

Planters and Freedmen have both been constantly under the observation of Superintendents and Provost Marshals, a synopsis of whose opinions is here given—that of Col. Thomas being made the basis. When differences occur between it and others, they are stated.

1. What is your opinion of the quality, the variety and amount of food furnished by lessees, &c., as far as your observation has extended?

The amount has generally been sufficient, but the quality and variety have not been what they should.

Natchez: [Col. Mitchell, Superintendent and Provost Marshal:] Insufficient in quantity, and inferior in quality on about half the plantations.

Arkansas: [Maj. W. G. Sargent, Superintendent:] The quality has generally been good, in variety coming near the Government rations for soldiers, and sufficient in quantity.

2. How far have justice and kindness prevailed in the treatment of the negroes by their employers?

Col. Thomas:—Just as far as they would assist the planters and making larger crops, and keep them out of trouble with the authorities. There are some honorable exceptions to this mean average.

Lieut. Col. Mitchell:—Same as above.

Major Sargent:—So far as this question applies to planters, justice and kindness have marked their conduct, except in a few instances; but when applied to citizen residents of the State of Arkansas, the rule is unfortunately somewhat different; still there are cases where these are kind and considerate.

3. How far have such traits been manifested by furnishing Sanitary stores to the sick and feeble; by a liberal construction of contracts or the reverse; by continuing rations to the sick; and by extending them to the dependent and helpless?

Col. Thomas:—In some cases sanitary stores have been furnished, and good care taken of the sick. None have given their contracts a liberal construction, and but few have treated their hands as they should have done.

Lieut. Col. Mitchell:—No sanitary stores have been furnished, except in a very few cases.

Maj. Sargent:—Generally the planters have construed their contracts liberally; and in many instances given extra wages and clothing as incentives to industry; and manifested kindness towards the sick, dependent and helpless.

4. What do you think of the quality and amount of clothing furnished?

' Col. Thomas:—The people could get all they wanted, if they paid for it. This was the construction the planters put on the order.

5. What disposition to speculate on the necessities of the people have you observed?

Col. Thomas:—But little disposition of this sort manifested. As, practically, the planter has got the work of the negro for his board and clothes, but little wool was left for the most expert shearer.

Lieut. Col. Mitchell.—Such a disposition has been manifested in a few instances.

Maj. Sargent:—A disposition to make gains has been clearly manifested; yet the natural cupidity of employers has been restrained by the presence and authority of military power.

6. Suggest any plan for improving the condition of the people, in this respect, hereafter.

Col. Thomas:—Classify according to capacity and willingness to labor; fix a minimum price for each class; pay full wages, and supply the Freedmen, at cost, with everything they need.

Lieut. Col. Mitchell:—Print a short system of rules for the government of lessees and hands. Allow no traffic unless approved by the Provost Marshal of Freedmen.

Maj. Sargeant:—A strict classification of labor; fix the rate of wages; and supply them with necessary goods at a fair per cent. above cost; reserving the profit as a fund to relieve the necessitous.

7. Have the people been led to invest much in trifles?

Col. Thomas:—They have not.

8. How severely have the people been tasked with labor? Worked how many hours per day? How many days per week?

Col. Thomas:—No complaints can be made against the planters in this thing. The Freedmen regulated the matter to suit themselves, and quit work when they thought they had done as much as they ought.

Lieut. Col. Mitchell:—The people have worked, on an average, eight hours per day, five days in the week.

Maj. Sargent:—The Freedmen have not complained of over-work. They, usually, on plantations, have Saturday afternoons to themselves.

9. Has labor been exacted on rainy or stormy days?

Col. Thomas:—It has not.

10. Have Planters succeeded in developing industry?

Col. Thomas :—No. Freedmen have worked well, but not better than slaves used to work. *Independent* labor on plantations, in wood-yards and in cities, has done more to develop industry than any other kind.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Same as above.

Maj. Sargent :—In a much greater degree than might have been supposed, when we consider that their notions of liberty were, rest from labor, and comparative idleness.

11. If so, by what methods, and to what extent?

Col. Thomas :—Freedmen have been worked about as they always were; but not with the old inhumanity and cruelty.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Same as above.

Major Sargeant :—By the authority vested in us, as Superintendents, to compel the able bodied to labor; the motive of compensation; the honor at stake of fulfilling their contracts; and the incentive of a bonus and extra compensation offered by planters.

12. Compare the practical results of Freedom and Slavery.

Col. Thomas :—See ans. to Ques. 23.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—The circumstances surrounding labor have not afforded a fair result, or sufficient data for comparison.

Maj. Sargent :—No answer.

13. What wages have been paid, and how?

Col. Thomas :—Generally, in accordance with Orders No. 9.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Since the season for cotton picking opened, hands have been paid by the 100 pounds, receiving from 40 to 75 cts.

Maj. Sargent :—Generally, in accordance with Orders 9.

14 and 15. Recommend any judicious plan of compensation, and compare any of the plans already adopted and proposed.

Col. Thomas :—As set forth in answer to Question 6, preferable.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Can recommend no improvements, except to allow the negroes to make their own bargains in regard to wages.

Maj. Sargent :—No answer.

16. What Medical attention have the people received?

Col. Thomas :—Very little indeed—only in extreme cases.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—A supply of medicines is usually kept on the plantations, and in some cases administered by the overseer; sometimes by a “doctor woman,” who devotes her time to this. Regular physicians have seldom been employed.

Major Sargent :—Medicines have been furnished by Government, and attendance given by Hospital stewards in some localities; though in the main, a sad deficiency has occurred in supplying the wants of these people in this particular.

17. What success or neglect of schools have you noticed?

Col. Thomas :—Schools have been neglected on Plantations. It has been almost impossible to keep them, and no effort has been made to do so.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Schools have been kept on two plantations in this District.

Maj. Sargent :—Schools have been successfully inaugurated in towns and near wood-yards; but entirely neglected on plantations, save in one or two instances.

18. What improvement in their domestic relations have you seen, and what credit do you give the lessee for any you have observed?

Col. Thomas :—They have improved in their domestic relations as they have a natural desire to do. Planters have not done what they ought, to assist in this respect; but have used their influence in some degree on the side of truth and right.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Same as above.

Maj. Sargent :—A marked improvement. The lessee, perhaps, is entitled to very little of the credit; for it is attributable to the Freedman's own desire for such improvement.

19. What increasing regard for truth and the rights of property do you observe?

Col. Thomas :—An improvement. The fact that each one now possesses something of his own, makes him careful to guard what he has; and disinclines him from stealing from others, and gives rise to mutual agreements on this subject. Again, the abolishment of the degrading and inhuman punishments, once so prevalent, has removed one great cause of untruth. The influence of teachers, in localities where those laborers can be found, has tended to improve their morals as well as their minds.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—No answer.

Maj. Sargent :—Much improvement. The rights of property are regarded, and few cases appear before our Freedmen's Judicial Tribunals, based upon violations in this particular.

20. What progress do you see in their disposition to labor steadily; to remain at home; and to be quiet?

Col. Thomas :—But little change can be noticed in these particulars. An independent course of thinking does not tend to make people steadily industrious, continuers at home or quiet citizens, when they see that the rules and regulations for their guidance, which they had no part in making, are not as beneficent as they should be.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—There seems to be some improvement, though it is not general.

Maj. Sargent :—They have, in all branches of the Government; with citizens; with officers; and with lessees, labored steadily and quietly.

21. Are Military organizations and instrumentalities necessary, in the present disturbed state of the country, to secure the bests interests both of the negro and his employer?

Col. Thomas :—Absolutely and vitally necessary.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Same as above.

Maj. Sargent :—Absolutely necessary. More complaints have been made by lessees for lack of Military organizations to protect them, than from all other sources together. Indeed, most of the lessees seemed to expect that the whole Military strength of the Government would be useful for their own benefit.

22. Should men, who have cruelly mistreated their laborers, be permitted to lease lands of the Government?

Col. Thomas :—Certainly not.

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Same as above.

Maj. Sargent :—They should not.

23. State any facts which shew the progress of the Freedmen; that display the best means of their improvement and elevation, and the utility of this Department in achieving this object.

[Col. Thomas, and Major Sargent, give no specific answer to this Question, but refer to the general tenor of their reports which have been so fully quoted here.]

Lt. Col. Mitchell :—Affairs have been very much disorganized in this district; out of the twenty-five plantations leased in one parish, all but two have been raided, some of them repeatedly; working stock, clothing, bedding, everything portable carried away, and the rest destroyed. Many lessees have been made prisoners by the guerrillas, and two have been killed. Many negroes, too, have been driven off. Forty-four were taken at one time, from a single plantation, and have not been heard from since. Owing to these facts, but little chance has existed to test these questions. Among the evils that deserve notice and demand a remedy, are—the neglect of the lessees to furnish proper and sufficient food to the hands, and care and medicines for the sick. There seems to be a general and well-founded complaint in these respects. The looseness with which accounts are kept between employers and laborers, gives the latter no power to detect fraud or imposition. This too requires attention.

#### PROVOST MARSHAL SYSTEM.

The following, from Col. Thomas' Report, will show the working of the Provost Marshal system:

By the provisions of Orders No. 9, Assistant Provost Marshals were to be appointed to enforce its execution. They were promptly appointed, and entered upon their duties without precedents to guide them. It is not, therefore, astonishing that, in discharging their duties, they often made mistakes; and some may have been influenced in their decisions by favors from Planters. Their instructions were to have all the parties to a case notified, so that all the evidence might be brought forward, and just conclusions formed. Many cases have been referred to me for investiga-

tion, when the Assistant Provost Marshal felt that he was not competent to decide them.

"Planters were prone to bring frivolous cases before the Provost Marshals; as for instance, that a negro was late in getting to work; and thus sought to throw little details of government upon their hands. It was difficult to see what to do with such cases, except to dismiss them in order to attend to more serious affairs; and then the planters accused the officers of inefficiency.

"The complaints demanding most attention were those of abuse made by Freedmen. Planters had often to be reminded, that they were not working slaves, and that abuses of this kind could not be tolerated. Questions of pay, time worked, and other points came up, arising out of different constructions of Orders 9. The Provost Marshals are kept busy, riding from place to place, examining books and bills, and gathering information for an honest settlement of Freedmen's affairs.

"Several Provost Marshals have been removed for failure in duty, or from suspicions of taking bribes. Every effort has been made to render them efficient; and those who complain of any inefficiency, whether they are employer or employee, should remember the large extent of country under one man's control, and the hundreds of people that required his attention. The records of their offices attest their industry."

#### ARKANSAS—INSPECTION.

The information from Arkansas has so far been presented in merely fragmentary quotations from Major Sargent's Reports, and those of his assistants. A more detailed statement is found in the following report of Lt. Col. Eaton, 69th U. S. C. I., who was ordered to make a rigid inspection of the posts in that State. He has gone over the whole field with great care, at all of the interior points. The inspection at Helena was less thorough, on account of the lateness of his arrival.

He has penetrated not only the facts, but the philosophy they suggest. His report is given entire. Special attention will be attracted by his remarks upon the self-support of the blacks, their disposition to labor, &c., compared with poor whites. On this point it may be remarked, that more whites than blacks are now fed by the Government at Memphis. It will also be noticed that there seems to be a great difference of character in favor of lessees in Arkansas, compared with those near Vicksburg and Natchez; as well as greater security of plantations, less loss of lives among laborers, and of mules and supplies among the planters; resulting from the fact that the fanciful, or otherwise unpractical schemes, which obtained so strong an influence at other points, took less hold there. Plantations were leased more nearly within

the limits suggested by military advice, and the freedmen were treated more strictly as required by my officers. Of the 11,363 freedmen reported in the working season, only 985 were drawing rations. Even these were doing work more than sufficient for their own support; and had not the ravages of the worm taken place, a very large profit would have been derived from their labor.

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS,  
December 17, 1864.

LIEUT. JOHN F. PERRY,

Adjutant Freedmen's Department.

LIEUTENANT,—In compliance with the order of Col. John Eaton, Jr., General Superintendent of Freedmen, appointing me Inspector of Freedmen for the State of Arkansas, I have the honor to submit the following report:—

#### ACCOUNTS.

In looking over the books of the Superintendents of Freedmen in this State, I find the accounts kept with apparent honesty and accuracy; but not, excepting those of the State Superintendent, with that neat order and completeness, and with all items substantiated by such vouchers as the Army Regulations and the instructions of the General Superintendent require. When each superior, as is proposed, demands of his subordinates, in monthly settlements, a duplicate of the voucher for each receipt or disbursement, the safety of these officers, as well as the good of the service, will be enhanced.

#### QUARTERMASTER'S RETURNS.

Beside money belonging to the Freedmen's Department, a large amount of Quartermaster's stores passes through the hands of these officers; but some forget that they are held responsible, like other officers, to the Quartermaster General, and fail to make the proper returns.

#### OFFICIAL RECORDS.

Nor are the records of orders given and received, of contracts and passes, of complaints with the witnesses and findings, and of official letters and papers with their endorsements and answers, as complete as is desirable. Blank books, suitably ruled, are needed for this purpose.

#### PASSES.

There is great want of uniformity in passes. The blanks vary in form. At Helena they are given only to those wishing to go in and out of the lines. At the other posts all are required to obtain them; but there are no regular patrols to enforce the orders. They are eagerly sought for by the men, as they secure them from conscription and disturbance. Many of the women have obtained them; but not being interfered with except on special complaints, as many more have neglected to do so. The

necessity of correct information in regard to the avocations of all, that the Superintendents may be enabled to check vagrancy and corruption, and the unduly crowding of any particular business, is too apparent, to one conversant with the life of these people in cities, to need comment.

By reason of these deficiencies any estimate of the number of Freedmen, who enjoy the protection of this Supervision, by the number of passes, is far below the actual census.

Excepting at Helena the pass for the employee has been obtained by the employer, and has answered for the contract of hire. And, rightly, the acceptance of labor should ensure reasonable wages; and while the conditions on which the labor of Freedmen may be obtained are accessible to all, the pass would appear to be sufficient without greater formality. The only security of pay and suitable treatment, by either formal contract or pass, is the efficiency of this Supervision. The simplest form would, therefore, seem preferable.

Large numbers, beyond the lines, have been regularly hired. Some planters have come in forty miles to obtain passes, and thereby secure their hands and their crops. The adoption of compensated labor anywhere is gratifying; but the danger of the products of such labor falling to the enemy, and the urgent demand for more labor at every post in the State, make it desirable that as many as possible should be brought in. Although the value to the enemy of cribs full of corn and stacks of forage is duly appreciated by our officers, the importance of the laborer who makes all these is comparatively unnoticed. It must strike every one, that the most serviceable foraging is that which not only deprives the enemy of the present crop, but disables him for making any surplus in future.

I would respectfully suggest, that all blanks for passes be issued from the general office; that a reference to the number of each previous pass be made, so that the whereabouts of each person at any time may be ascertained; and that those to go beyond the lines be more carefully registered.

#### CONDUCT OF EMPLOYERS.

It has been difficult for late masters and mistresses to recognize the equality of themselves and their former slaves before martial law. Many outrages were perpetrated upon their persons and property after the occupancy of these posts by our troops. Little attention was paid to the negro. But through the necessity and profit of his labor to citizens, the large demand by the army, and the consequent scarcity, and above all the speedy redress obtained through this Supervision, the rights of the blacks have become well-nigh as secure as those of the whites. At some posts, where this Supervision is not interfered with, they obtain justice with far less delay.

A few planters of the old *regime* have in good faith embraced the new order of things. But the great majority of them acquiesce only through compulsion; and, as they hope their subjugation will be but temporary, they are at pains to retain their former slaves as near them and as

much within their knowledge as possible. These have naturally exchanged curses and punishments for entreaties and cajolery, and tirades against the restraints of lawful freedom.

The planters from the north, with few exceptions, have treated their laborers with marked fairness, and often with generosity. Many of them were disabled officers and soldiers from our army.

Refractory and indolent laborers have been turned over to the Superintendents; and there has been scarcely an attempt at any kind of punishment, much less the cruel and unusual. The moral influence of military power backing all reasonable demands of the planters, as shown by these occasional examples of offenders, has been most happy and effectual.

It is the testimony of nearly all planters, whether southern or northern, that they could not have expected any set of laborers to work better than theirs. They have, in some cases, returned to their work after being repeatedly driven away by guerrillas, and when no white dared to go near. There are a few instances, where they have been furnished arms, of their repulsing these marauders. It is to be remarked too, very creditably to the negro, that those who have cared most for the interest of their laborers, have been rewarded by the greatest cheerfulness and the heartiest good will. The sullenness of the old *regime* has disappeared. A wonderfully keen scent for the direction of their interests already characterizes this once stolid race. They have discovered an alacrity, a faithfulness and an honor—not by any means to a degree that is to be hoped for—yet sufficient to compel the acknowledgement of those who declared that freedom would make this people nothing but thieving and licentious vagabonds.

#### WAGES.

The wages announced in the Treasury Regulations, and approved by Gen. Thomas, have been the lowest paid. The change allowed by subsequent orders was adopted by but few outside of Helena. The regulation of wages by age or strength alone has been found unjust, and would be little regarded by a planter in hiring his laborers again.

During the cotton-picking season, nearly all were paid by the pound, and earned from one to seven dollars per day. Many have been allowed a third or half of the crop, and have realized, though the season was poor, handsome profits. Among them are not a few of remarkable judgment and force of character, who have been engaged at their own prices as foremen. The earnings of those in the cities have largely exceeded those on the plantations. The planters say that they are indifferent to the rates of pay, if they can obtain the laborers. Considering the enormous income from an ordinary crop, and the scarcity of labor, the wages which have been, for the most part, the minimum in orders, is far too small. If employers were allowed to put in bids with their request for hands, to the Post Superintendents, and the people enabled to take advantage of the highest offers, greater fairness and a considerable advance would be obtained. Those who bear the heat and burden of the fields deserve the larger share of the gains.

## SHORT SETTLEMENTS.

The rights of the blacks, in person and property, have been so long outraged by the whites, that they are exceedingly distrustful. Only by frequent and regular settlements will their pay have its full stimulus to exertion. Those planters who, through the cotton-picking season, met the dues of their laborers promptly every week, accomplished a third more than those who paid irregularly.

The Government would not be burdened with the sick and helpless more than at present if planters were required to take their hands by the year, and settle by the month; while the negro would do more work with greater confidence, and deserve better pay. If any stoppage was to be made for loss of time through sickness, it could be more satisfactorily adjusted. And a proper account in this way could be as readily inspected and audited by the Superintendents, at the close of the year, as any other. The oftener they can safely exercise their judgment in saving or spending their pay, the sooner they will be fitted for independent transactions.

## FOOD AND CLOTHING.

To this end they should receive their wages in full; and the materials for food and clothing should be furnished at reasonable prices, and conveniently, so that they may purchase for themselves. Rations, excepting in a few instances, where they have been regularly dealt out, have been kept in this way at the plantations. Clothing has also been furnished at some; but elsewhere than at Helena they have, for the most part, depended for this upon the stores kept in town by Goverment agents. An immense saving in food is effected; and there are provided responsible persons, without inducement to cajole them to squander their money, with whom they can take their first lessons in trading with safety. All unite in saying, that without protection from frauds in change and exorbitant prices, they would scarce be able to clothe themselves. Especially is this true of the more distant posts; as Pine Bluff. At this place, while domestics were selling in town at \$1 25 per yard, the same quality and width could be obtained at the Freedmen's Store at sixty cents. At Little Rock so large was the trade of the blacks, that these stores benefited the whites as well, by lowering, throughout the city, the demands of the traders. Durable material, for necessary articles, is offered at these stores, rather than fashionable and gaudy trash.

## IMPROVEMENT IN TASTE.

The good taste and practical sense of the negroes, as discovered in their purchases, though not by any means unexceptionable, would surprise a stranger. They scout the wild and gorgeous colors they once preferred. You would scarce anywhere find a house full of day laborers so well and neatly clad as of a Sunday at the Colored Churches at Little Rock. The gay extravagance of the blacks is often animadverted upon; but it only appears in a respectful notice of the Sabbath. On Monday those who were dressed as though their income were thousands, appear in homely

suits, becoming their avocations. Their fine clothes are therefore not expensive.

No complaints of the quantity or quality of food have been heard of, with the exception of a few cases at Helena, which have been reported by Major Sargent, the State Superintendent.

#### HOUSES.

At the plantations they have occupied the old quarters. In the town they have built log houses by hundreds, which form little villages. In Little Rock there are several of these. One is known as "Lickskillet;" and another as "Brownsville." The houses are not arranged in streets, and seem to have grown up in their places as indifferently as mushrooms. Their roofing is of shales. Most have floors, but boards cannot be obtained without great difficulty. Few have any windows. They are comfortable; and although not as good as they will soon be able to build, they are fair specimens of the dwellings of a large share of the white people in Arkansas. At Helena boards are plentier, and the houses of those in the town are better than elsewhere.

As will be inferred, the attention of Superintendents is needed to prevent irregularity. Indeed no houses should be located without his consent. Many are furnished with abundance and kept with neatness. But an occasional inspection is needed by many more, to quicken their pride and elevate their taste.

#### SCHOOLS.

The planters hired laborers with as few children as possible. The number on each plantation did not, therefore, seem to warrant separate schools; and the combination of those so far apart seemed equally impracticable. No schools of this sort are reported. But in the towns, and at the Home Farms, these privileges have been enjoyed and appreciated. They crowd the school rooms. Soldiers and laborers carry about them their speller or reader, and are frequently overheard reciting to each other.

#### LACK OF SCHOOL HOUSES.

There is great difficulty in obtaining houses for this purpose, more especially at the Home Farms. In the towns churches are opened, but not enough to accommodate all. It is worthy of note, that in the Capital of Arkansas, there was not a single school-house. Although more teachers are still needed, charities in the form of school-houses are more urgently demanded. By the enforcement of late orders the Freedmen Department will soon be enabled to pay teachers without assistance. The earnings of these people in towns are so large, that they can readily pay tuition. The feeling of self-dependence awakened, gratifies and elevates them.

#### SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHERS.

The Superintendents of Schools provided in orders have not reached the interior posts. Their duties have been performed by the Superinten-

dents of Freedmen. It is hoped that they will soon arrive. Mr. Allen at Helena is an efficient Superintendent, and is doing a good work.

The lady teachers have been most devoted to their work, and by reason of the ease with which discipline is maintained in these schools, and the childlike character, as well as attainment, of those people, they have been by far the more successful. Some gentlemen, like the Rev. Mr. Todd at Pine Bluff, more interested in the good of these people than jealous for the aggrandizement of their sect or association, have been exceedingly useful. The presence of such teachers as Mr. Todd, Mrs. Thomas and Miss Warren, at the Home Farm of Pine Bluff, and of Mr. and Mrs. Barstow at that of Little Rock, has had an elevating and restraining influence of as great moral value as teaching itself.

The colored people have already a representative among the teachers in the person of Rev. Andrew Wallace, of Little Rock.

#### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

The only Industrial School in the State is at Helena. Here girls and women are taught in the cutting and sewing of garments for both sexes, and at the same time are paid for what they are able to do. The most artful housewife would here be surprised with new schemes in domestic economy. Old pants are transformed into new aprons. An old army overcoat furnishes a lady's cape, a boy's jacket and a skirt for a girl. This work will be appreciated by those who know that very few of these women are capable of anything but the rudest stitching and the least possible tact. Such a School is needed at every post.

#### MARRIAGES.

The forms of marriage certificates and registers have at length been received. The necessity for the former had lead to the printing of one, different from that of the General Superintendent, for temporary use. For want of these, the order in reference to the marriage of those living together, is as yet but partially enforced, and the record imperfect. Respect for the family relation has been quickened, and is keeping pace with the rapid growth of respect for themselves. Husbands and wives, parents and children, separated by long distances, are coming together. The difficulties and expense of travel do not prevent soldiers' wives at Helena from visiting their husbands at Fort Smith. Frequent correspondence, which is encouraged and assisted in every way by the Superintendents of Freedmen, is kept up between them.

#### HOME FARMS.

At the Home Farms are gathered those out of employment, new comers and vagrants, and those rendered helpless through age or misfortune. These are rationed by the Government, and are supposed by many to be a burden and an expense. But notwithstanding all these Homes were put in operation this year, with all implements, draught animals and seeds to be obtained; and notwithstanding a nearly total failure of the cot-

ton crop, which was the chief reliance, those in this State have earned sufficient to pay the Government its outlays, and fair wages to the hands.

#### WHITE AND BLACK REFUGEES COMPARED.

Here, if any where, lies all the expense of Government for the immense number of negro laborers within our lines; but the benefits of this provision are to be measured, not by the success of these farms alone, but by the products of all this labor, which accrues directly or indirectly to our advantage, heightened by the amount lost to the enemy. It may not be improper to suggest to those who declaim against the Government being burdened with negro paupers, that while in this State, the number of colored people within our lines is fully equal to that of the whites, twice as many of the latter draw rations without making any return whatever. Many of these whites are glad to live and work in partnership with the more thrifty negroes.

#### WOODYARDS.

The woodyards have been a source of considerable income. In the hands of private individuals, the profits of the work of the able-bodied go into the hands of speculators, who furnish no schools to the children, nor assistance to the helpless. Besides provision being made for these, in the hands of the Government, exorbitant rates are prevented and a greater abundance supplied.

#### PINE BLUFF.

Of all the Home Farms in the State, that at Pine Bluff is by far the best. The people are better housed, better clad and healthier, than at any other. This is partly due to an early commencement, and to the number of the old quarters on the place; but chiefly to the energy of Capt. Mallory, the Post Superintendent, and his sagacity in making choice of Mr. J. J. Williams as Camp Master, and private De Tar, 1st Ind. Cav., as Acting Surgeon, who have proved the right men for their positions. The following report of the sanitary condition of this Home Farm, for six months ending Oct. 31st, 1864, will be of interest:

Month.	Mean Strength of all Ages and Sexes.	Number of Cases Treated.	Number of Deaths.
May,	870	620	63
June,	850	480	55
July,	760	402	32
August,	700	320	15
Sept.,	680	206	6
Oct.,	720	102	2
Nov.,	786	9	6

No sick last day of November.

It must be borne in mind, that a large number of these were not brought to the camp until dangerously sick.

Here, as elsewhere, a regular account has been kept between the

workmen and the Freedmen's Department, and a share of their pay has been advanced to them in clothing.

#### RECRUITS FROM HOME FARM.

Capt. Mallory has obtained from his camp nearly a thousand recruits for the U. S. service. Gen. Clayton, the Post Commander, fully recognizes the advantages of this supervision, and he has rendered all proper assistance to the enforcement of its orders.

#### CAUSES OF LARGE NUMBER.

The large number at this Farm will attract attention. Many are continually arriving from the rebel lines. Large numbers were hired until the crop was gathered, and have been returned to the Superintendent. It has also been swelled by an order from the Post Commander, directing all in town, without certificate of employment from some white person, to be sent to the Farm. This, however, has, at the request of Superintendent Mallory, been but partially enforced. It must not be supposed that these were not all employed during the cotton season. At Pine Bluff, as elsewhere, the demand for labor was greater than the supply. Capt. Mallory had on the Farm itself 800 acres in cultivation; and but for the army-worm would have realized for the Government as many bales of cotton.

#### SUGGESTS A CHANGE OF BASE.

But good policy suggests, that as few as possible of these people be allowed to gather at such distant posts, where the value of the ration is trebled by transportation; and a sudden evacuation would be accompanied with so much inconvenience and distress. Near the Mississippi their supply would be easier, a change made with less trouble, and their labor be of greater value.

#### LITTLE ROCK.

The most of the people at the Home Farm were shipped from Fort Smith in the utmost destitution, and thrown upon the Superintendent without notice. The houses were necessarily built with haste, and are of inferior quality, as well as poorly furnished. Large numbers have been sick, and an undue proportion have died. It is to be hoped that some suitable person will be found without delay, to act as surgeon at this important post. New and better houses are being built upon higher ground, and there is reason to hope that health and comfort will be materially improved.

#### DU VALL'S BLUFF.

A camp for Freedmen has just been arranged at Du Vall's Bluff, by Lieut. Davis, the Post Superintendent. His services have been a great relief to the General Commanding the Post and his subordinates. Out of about 600 negroes, only 61 draw rations. These are principally soldiers' wives and families. They have good houses, and but few are sick. Num-

bers are just now coming in from the surrounding country, who are destitute and in need of charity. Teachers have been engaged, and schools will soon be opened.

#### MOUTH OF WHITE RIVER.

There are about two hundred negroes at the mouth of White River, who have been employed in a woodyard, and on a plantation, for a private individual. The profits of the labor of the strong have been taken without care for the sick and helpless. There are no schools here. They have, for the most part, good houses; but live in miserable squalor, and are full of complaints of their employer. It is earnestly recommended, that the benefits of this supervision be extended to them, and that a wood-yard be established, which shall be managed more advantageously for them, as well as the Government.

#### HELENA.

At the Home Farm at Helena, the people are in fair houses, and living comfortably. Dr. Palmer, who is acting as surgeon, is an attentive and efficient officer.

The hospital, which he had arranged in town, so much to their benefit, on the supposed change of the Freedmen into the hands of the Treasury, was turned over to the Post Surgeon. It is to be hoped that it will soon be returned to the use of this Department.

#### HOSPITALS AND ORPHAN ASYLUMS.

Hospitals and Orphan Asylums are needed at every Post, either at the "Home Farm" or in town. Something answering for the former is found now at every Home. The best that could be done, under the present difficulties, in obtaining lumber and cots, has been done; but the hospitals are neither sufficiently large nor comfortably furnished. It is as poor sanitary economy as it is of labor, to scatter the sick among the well. This has often been the only recourse.

There is but one Orphan Asylum in the State. It is located at Helena. The neatness and order of everything here, in the midst of so many children, and such inconveniences, is as surprising as it is beneficent. These little ones owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, the self-denying Managers.

#### CHARITIES.

Under the guardianship of this Supervision, the Freedmen are far less dependent upon charity than is supposed by the good people of the North. Where their rights are secured, necessities furnished at reasonable prices, and they are directed to employment and sources of gain, there is no doubt of the ability of the great majority to support themselves, and educate their children. The new comers require temporary assistance, and those helpless through age or misfortune are necessarily dependent; but these, by organization and prudent management, are already self-sup-

porting. If a fair crop had been obtained this year, not only rations and labor could have been paid for by the Freedmen Department, but the needed hospitals, Orphan asylums, schools and clothing for the indigent, could have been furnished without assistance. They are, therefore, in temporary need of help; and most urgently, in the building and furniture of Hospitals and School Houses. In clothing, when that purchased by the funds of the Freedmen Department shall have reached the different parts of the State, as it has already Helena, it will be found that far more was called for and provided than was actually needed to make all comfortable. As has been intimated, the greatest charity is protection and guardianship; and if the Government furnishes this, they will soon rise beyond the need of any. The more efficient, the more temporarily it will be required. The hands, from which the President's Proclamation has released them, are still clutching after them. Though the fury of the beast, which has had its appetite sharpened by a taste of blood, and been deprived of its prey, be subdued into cajolery and deceit; it still keeps its eye on its victim. A swift and strong arm only can restrain the passions of these diverse races and castes, until unity of interests shall be developed, and respect for the law secured. The struggle for impartial freedom in the South would otherwise be long and violent. Only by this can the freed people be protected from the corruption and lawlessness of the worst of our armies, as well as the rapacity of speculators. A protection merely advisory would be emasculated and powerless. Civil Agents, empowered with military authority, would be absurd. In the condition of the South, and in the midst of armies, only Military authority in friendly hands will avail.

#### HOMESTEADS.

The development of the wealth of the South, and the self-dependence of the blacks, would be greatly hastened, if the Government were at pains to open to them, and encourage them to take, Homesteads upon the abandoned plantations. Many in the State have this year cultivated for themselves little patches, and even hundreds of acres. Large numbers have saved enough to buy their mules and plows, and furnish themselves during the coming season. The number of these independent planters could be quadrupled every year. Contrary, however, to the interests of these people, as well as that of the Government, it would appear that large capitalists have too much the preference. It should be known, that tens of acres could be rented, as well as hundreds. As it is, the great plantations of the old regime are scarce ever broken.

The great weakness of the negro is in his social instincts. This has been aggravated by being herded together in such numbers on these great plantations. They need to be enticed to set themselves apart in families. Separated upon these small farms, they will grow in domestic virtues and self-reliance. Common schools will then be possible at the South. Thus set in their way by encouragement and protection, the ends of all supervision, which must be as speedily as possible to do away with the necessity for any, will be effectually accomplished.

**A MODEL NEGRO.**

That the negro is not wholly without ability to realize this prospect, there is convincing proof in the life of a full black, at Pine Bluff, well known as "Uncle Reuben." He was born in Georgia, and fell to a master who had but few slaves. He discovered such energy and tact, as well as complete devotion to his master's interests, that the latter entrusted every thing to his management. The slave raised him from poverty to wealth. The master was enabled to buy a large plantation in Arkansas, and stock it with negroes. As his circumstances grew easier, his habits became extravagant. His estate became involved; and when overwhelmed with indebtedness, he died. The widow, helpless and without resource, called Uncle Reuben, told him that she had no one to rely upon but him, and placed her all in his hands. He was aroused by this touching confidence. He became more ambitious than ever to bring the first Bolls of Cotton to town, and to average still more to the acre than the neighboring planters. The number of bales grown on the plantation increased every year out. The children were sent North to school. His success was so remarkable, that the white overseers around became jealous of a negro's outstripping them. They compelled the mistress to place a white nominally over him. He was not, however, interfered with, until the young masters returned from the North. The fact that a negro slave had educated them, and by his own prudence and energy had amassed for them a fortune of nearly \$150,000. was not as grateful to them as true. His mistress, however, always treated him as kindly as she dared. On the approach of our armies he remained till all had left but himself and family. Being assured by our officers that the President's Proclamation was true, he also quietly came in. Spirited and proud, he is the most humble of all. He refuses to sit in the presence of whites, and touches his hat to you at every address.

**LACK OF OFFICERS.**

It is but justice to refer to the inadequate number of officers, which Major W. G. Sargent has had to assist him in the supervision of the State.

For this reason he has been unable to extend its benefits to all points as fully as could have been desired, and has been compelled to do the greater part of the duties of the Post Superintendent at Little Rock, as well as those of his own proper office.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

**L. B. EATON, Lieut. Col.**

Com'g 69th U. S. C. I.

**QUESTIONS TO AGENTS OF BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES, &c.**

The following are questions proposed to agents of benevolent organizations, teachers, and others laboring for the Freedmen within the territory of this Supervision; with a synopsis of

the answers returned by the following gentlemen:—Rev. S. G. Wright, agent of the American Missionary Association, at Natchez; Rev. Joseph Warren, D. D., Chaplain and Assistant in Charge of Freedmen; Rev. James A. Hawley, Chaplain and Superintendent of Colored Schools in the District of Vicksburg, including Natchez; Mr. J. C. R. Faris, agent of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, at Natchez; Rev. Joel Grant, Chaplain; and Rev. L. H. Cobb, Superintendent of Colored Schools at Memphis. All these gentlemen have given attention to the Freedmen from an educational and moral stand-point. Dr. Warren has had fifteen years experience among the people of Northern Hindustan; Mr. Wright nineteen years among the Indians of our Northwest; and Mr. Grant has been appointed Superintendent of Colored Schools for Arkansas, after having had much experience among the Freedmen since early in 1863.

1. What can you say of the aptitude of the colored people to receive instruction?

All answer:—They receive instruction very readily.

Mr. Wright:—Used to think them inferior; but two years' experience convinces me that they are equal to whites with equal advantages.

Three answer:—They have great aptness for language, music and the imitative arts.

Messrs. Hawley and Warren:—Perhaps they will prove deficient in logic and the mathematics.

2. Compare the mixed and unmixed races in this respect?

Messrs. Hawley and Wright:—The mixed are generally superior; but have had greater advantages.

Messrs. Faris and Cobb:—Think the black superior to mixed.

Messrs. Grant and Warren:—Can see no difference.

3. Have you been disappointed or otherwise in the results of your endeavors to improve and elevate this people?

Messrs. Hawley, Warren, Cobb and Faris:—No: the results are better than we had thought slavery had prepared them to exhibit.

Mr. Grant:—No: I never believed the pro-slavery argument, that the negro is incapable of intellectual culture.

Mr. Wright:—The whole work, so far, is a success.

4. What has been the general condition of the Freedmen as they first come within the Federal lines?

All answer:—Poor, ragged generally; many diseased and dying; some shrewd ones come in better condition; hopeful, but with intelligence much depressed.

5. Does your observation show their willingness to labor cheerfully for compensation?

Mr. Hawley:—Generally; but there are some thriftless.

Dr. Warren:—Yes; average as well as whites.

Four answer:—Yes; with good treatment and fair hope of remuneration.

6. What improvement, in this respect, do you see?

All answer, in substance:—Success increases industry and enterprise.

Mr. Grant:—Some have been demoralized by faithless employers.

Dr. Warren:—Improvement, or the reverse, accords with the treatment they receive from employers.

7. What improvement do you observe in their domestic relations?

Four answer:—Freedmen generally delighted with the privilege of forming lawful marriages.

Dr. Warren:—No people ever grew in civilization so fast.

Mr. Wright:—Parents strongly desire their children to be educated.

8. Will the people, if aided at first, and protected, be able, soon, to take care of themselves?

All answer:—Yes; if opportunity be afforded.

9. What patriotism and spirit is displayed by them in entering the army, and by their conduct in it?

All answer:—Generally very patriotic; though they need incitement to enter the army.

10. In the present disturbed state of the country, is military protection essential to their well being?

Mr. Hawley:—Essential while the war continues. No other will answer.

Messrs. Faris and Wright:—The same. And they must be governed.

Mr. Grant:—Indispensable.

Mr. Cobb:—Absolutely.

Dr. Warren:—Absolutely. Any other a mockery.

11. Should the benevolent contributions of the North, in their behalf, be increased?

Mr. Hawley:—Yes.

Mr. Cobb:—If rightly directed, the present rates are ample.

All others:—Yes, at least until peace.

12. Is the provision through this department, of rations, quarters, &c., for the benevolent engaged in your work of sufficient consequence, in your judgment, to justify this outlay of the Government for the mental and moral improvement of this people?

Mr. Grant :—Yes; it has done much good.

Mr. Cobb :—Its cost bears no proportion to the good done.

Messrs. Wright and Warren :—The results shew it; yet a Government officer should judge whether persons enjoying this provision are worthy of it.

Mr. Faris :—I think so.

Mr. Hawley :—Yes; but the issue should be with discrimination. Inconsiderate persons may overtax the Government. Rivalry of societies may have such a tendency.

#### QUESTIONS TO COMMANDING OFFICERS.

A series of questions were addressed to General Officers, who have been observant of Freedmen's affairs. They have done me the personal favor, and the country the service, of giving their private opinions in brief. The following synopsis of answers is presented. Their differences in reference to some details only give more strength to their points of agreement; on which their witness is conclusive. These Officers have had all of us—Superintendents, Provost Marshals, Planters, Teachers, Inspectors and Freedmen, under view, and their opinions close the testimony gathered.

1. Do you consider the emancipation of the slaves a help to military operations?

Maj. Gen. Dana, Commanding the Department of the Mississippi :—“I consider the emancipation of the slaves as a decided help to ultimate military success, and a necessity to and of military operations.”

Brig. Gen. Brayman, Commanding U. S. Forces at Natchez :—“It furnishes us with soldiers inured to the climate and to labor, and at the same times dries up the enemy's source of supply, and transfers to our service those who would otherwise be used against us.”

Brig. Gen. Andrews, Commanding U. S. Forces at Du Vall's Bluff :—Agrees with the above, and adds—“I do not hesitate to say, that what I have seen of slavery and freedom, as regards the colored race, since the war commenced, has made me an abolitionist—and this exclusive of considering them as a help in the war. I am of the opinion that their emancipation has been a blessing to them.”

“Brig. Gen. Hawkins, Commanding a Division of Colored Troops at Vicksburg :—“The emancipation of slaves is a great help to military operations, in bringing to our side a male able to bear arms, and anxious to fight with us for the security of their freedom. On the other hand, emancipation is an injury to us, as it prevents supplies being raised in the rebel country, on which our army might subsist while making marches or expeditions. \* \* \* Only the strong and able-bodied should be allowed to follow our troops when marching in the rebel country. \*

\* \* \* The produce raised by the others staying at home would do us more service than it would do the rebels."

[The common opinion is, that the able-bodied would not generally follow us unless their families were also allowed to do so.]

Brig. Gen. Chetlain, Commanding Colored Troops of Tennessee, through Maj. Paddock, his Inspector General, an observant and accomplished officer:—"Upon the whole I consider the emancipation of the blacks, and their consequent employment in the army, a great help to the service and the military operations of the Government."

2. While the present disturbed condition of our country remains, do you believe that the negroes can receive protection and justice through any other than MILITARY organizations and instrumentalities?

Maj. Gen. Dana:—"I believe that while Freedmen not in the army are allowed to remain at military posts or within the lines of the army, they can only receive protection and justice through military instrumentalities, directly or indirectly."

Brig. Gen. Brayman:—"As the sections where the negroes are found are in insurrection and under military law, no other than military agencies can be employed in behalf of the negro."

Brig. Gen. Andrews:—"I think Freedmen at present should be under the military authority."

Brig. Gen. Hawkins:—"I do not consider a military organization necessary for their care. Of course *all* matters must be under military control as long as the war lasts or martial law prevails."

Brig. Gen. Chetlain:—"If in special localities it be deemed proper to collect them together, and extend over them the care and guardianship of the public authorities, I should say that, at present, a military system would more nearly answer the purpose than would any civil agency. I cannot hope for much more than partial protection and justice in favored portions of the country until the restoration of civil authority has opened the way for a legislative provision of remedies against violence and fraud."

3. To what extent would you, for the present, seek to withdraw the blacks from their pursuits of private industry—agricultural, mechanical, etc., for the purpose of their enlistment or employment in the army?

Maj. Gen. Dana:—"I hold that every Freedman fit for military duty should be placed in the ranks."

Brig. Gen. Brayman:—"The black people should be withdrawn as little as possible from their accustomed pursuits—a fair proportion only, as in the case of white troops, brought into the army."

Brig. Gen. Andrews:—"I am decidedly in favor of conscripting colored men into the service. Then, if they are treated as soldiers should be

treated, and not made to do more than their share of fatigue duty, they will be well contented."

Brig. Gen. Hawkins :—"All able bodied men who can pass a surgical examination, should be received into the army by voluntary enlistment. Pressing them into service is a violation of their rights as freemen."

Brig. Gen. Chetlain :—"I should proceed with the recruitment of blacks as rapidly and as extensively as compatible with the number of able-bodied men to be had, and their proper organization for war; and this without regarding the numbers left behind for the industrial pursuits named."

#### 4. How can the freedmen best serve the country and their race?

Maj. Gen. Dana :—"For the present by military service."

Brig. Gen. Brayman :—"By having a country given them; being allowed to aid in saving it; and by being educated to habits of self-reliance, industry and virtue. Take the lands of rebel masters, who own them without earning them, and give them to loyal slaves, whose labor has made them valuable."

Brig. Gen. Andrews :—Agrees with above.

Brig. Gen. Hawkins :—By enlisting in the army. The country is benefitted, and they are educated in manliness and self-respect."

Brig. Gen. Chetlain :—"The freedman at present best serves his country by becoming a Union soldier. \* \* \* There should be the establishment of the ordinance of Christian Marriage; and stringent punishment for adultery. The freedman should acquire property, and take a family name; and, as a reward for military service, he should have land enough for a homestead."

#### 5. Please state any facts, or make any suggestions bearing upon the military value of this race, or any methods by which it may be made more available.

Maj. Gen. Dana :—"The whole record of military service in this war by the freedman shows their adaptability to, and great value in, the military service. The only change I can suggest in the present system of recruiting for colored troops is, that every freedman capable of military service be declared a soldier, and put in the ranks."

Brig. Gen. Brayman :—"As long as rebels choose to fight for the destruction of the Government, I would train their own slaves to fight them. After that I would make industrious citizens of them. I would have all, black and white, prepared in peace for soldiers in war, should it come again."

Brig. Gen. Andrews :—"I have had one regiment of colored troops in my command for several months, and it is a most excellent regiment."

Brig. Gen. Hawkins :—"Colored men make good infantry; and for cavalry I think they would make the best in the world; and when practicable they should be organized as cavalry."

Brig. Gen. Chetlain :—"In my opinion the amount of labor demanded of colored troops of this command has materially retarded instruction,

and to some extent affected the state of discipline. \* \* \* The processes now in employ for the examination of officers, and the dismissal of the incompetent, should be kept up until the service is rid of that class. \* \* \* These troops should have a separate organization and administration, at least as high as Brigades and Divisions; and they should be employed as cavalry to a greater extent. They ride well, are acquainted with and not averse to the care of horses, and are perfectly familiar with the country."

6. Is the care of this people a necessity both to themselves and the government?—and what is the importance of relieving department and post commanders of the burden of caring for them, or of entrusting this work to some sound and effective organization that shall meet this necessity?

Maj. Gen. Dana:—"It is of great importance that commanding officers be relieved of the care and responsibility of a non-military burden, and the government of their support, as early as possible. Whenever these people are concentrated in camps for care and support, they should be at points where the soil is easy of cultivation, and the position defensible; they should be under military protection, and consequently under military control; all classes of sharpers and traders should be kept away from them. The benevolent of the North should seek means to place them through the country where they would be enabled to earn a livelihood for themselves, relieve the present wants of labor on farms, and afford families the now much needed house servants. It appears to me also that the Northern factories could advantageously employ great numbers of the women and children."

Brig. Gen. Brayman:—"In transferring an untaught people from the care of their owners to our's, we become responsible for all the education, care, honest employment and protection we can give them; considering their rebel masters responsible for the sufferings incident to their transition from ignorance, helplessness and slavery, to that improved condition of which, in a state of freedom, this race may be capable. It being the business of Department and Post Commanders to conduct military operations, not to found colonies, nor to engage in utilitarian enterprizes; the interests of the Freedmen should be in charge of other organizations—all, however, being subordinated to the great purpose of our present military condition—that of suppressing the rebellion, and restoring to the Government its just supremacy."

Brig. Gen. Hawkins:—"All people need care, and the observance of justice towards them. The chief need is to furnish them with labor, and to do as little as possible for them in the way of charity."

Brig. Gen. Chetlain:—"At all events, I should deem it highly important that Post and Department Commanders be relieved of the burden spoken of.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND MORAL EFFORTS.

I am indebted to Chaplain Warren for the following presen-

tation of educational facts, and considerations touching Schools of Letters and Industry, Marriage, and Orphan Asylums :

#### SCHOOLS.

The officers of the Freedmen's Department would have discharged their trust very imperfectly, had they not felt that the mental and moral enlightenment of the people committed to their charge was a great object to be secured. Employment and Protection were necessities preceding Instruction in order only—not in importance.

#### EARLY EFFORTS.

Accordingly, from the very first, efforts were made to secure the assistance of Army Chaplains, and such other men as were likely to feel the necessity of attention to this matter; and the labors of benevolent persons, which were soon offered, to aid in instructing the freed people, were welcomed and encouraged. Teachers and Missionaries from the American Missionary Association, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, and the Society of Friends were the first in the field.

After the surrender of Vicksburg and the occupation of Natchez, a large number of these voluntary laborers came to aid in this work. Beside the Societies already named, the Board of Missions of the United Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterians, the United Brethren in Christ, the North Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, and the National Freedmen's Relief Association, sent many persons; and beside these were occasional laborers from other bodies.

#### RATIONS, ETC., ORDERED.

The Government ordered that all persons, duly accredited, who should come into the field for this purpose, should be furnished with transportation, quarters, rations and places in which to teach, so far as practicable. The Freedmen's Department was, of course, brought immediately into connection with these parties. It was soon arranged that they should draw their rations with the approval of the resident officers of the Department. Yet the connection of this Department with such teachers was very loose. No orders were given to the Superintendent of Freedmen by means of which he could do more than advise in regard to the location and distribution of teachers. No author-

ity was given to superintend their schools, to secure uniformity of school-books, or to regulate in any manner the conduct of teachers and agents.

#### POWER AND MEANS INADEQUATE.

In these circumstances the officers of the Department did what they could to aid the work. They had no funds to provide school-houses where these were lacking; and many of the missionaries and teachers were obliged to live and teach in places entirely inconvenient and inadequate. Our efforts could be only partly efficient. Complaints were sometimes uttered, the injustice of which only they can know, who take properly into consideration our circumstances and the limitations of our power.

In this Report it is impossible to give a detailed statement of the labor performed by each body of teachers. Only a general notion of what was accomplished can be conveyed.

In the cities, excepting Memphis, there were, last year, a sufficient numbers of teachers. The attendance of scholars upon the schools was good—almost all, of proper age, being in a school the greater part of the time. Some teachers had elementary books furnished by their societies; some had old books, which were sent down from the North in great variety—so that a school would be furnished with books, and yet not so that even a small class could have the same kind; the Tract Societies and Denominational Boards gave many books. The schools were almost universally without any desks, had no proper seats, and no sufficient rooms. And yet under all these disadvantages, thousands learned to read, and began to proceed beyond this.

In the Freedmen's camps the same state of things was found, with quarters and school accommodations worse. Many of the teachers submitted to privations and hardships, on account of which they are entitled to the gratitude of those whom they came to help, and the admiration of all who have any perception of the dignity of self-denial in laboring for the poor. In some of the camps and farms it was found impossible to maintain schools regularly; and in one or two no accommodations at all could be found.

It was intended that schools and teachers should be maintained on the leased plantations; but experience has proved that men who entered upon cotton cultivation, with the intention of making a great fortune in a single year, were not to be expected

voluntarily to meet our intentions in this respect. With two or three exceptions they made no effort to secure instruction for the people whom they employed. On most of the places it was entirely impracticable for teachers to reside, because they were unsafe for any one. If any system of leasing and cultivating abandoned plantations be adopted in future, some arrangement ought to be made to compel attention to this subject. But little preparation of the Freed People, exhibiting respectability of character or fitness for the business of life, can be secured on plantations managed as most of them have been for the year now closing.

Much work has also been done in the Colored Regiments, by teachers from the North, and by their Chaplains. This Department has had less to do with this branch of the general work than with any other; yet it has been our desire to promote and encourage it. We have aided to secure teachers for Regiments, and have sought to exercise all the influence that could properly be exerted in affairs totally in the power, and at the responsibility, of others.

#### EXTENT OF INSTRUCTION.

We have no means of saying precisely how many pupils have been under instruction within the Department. Some, but not nearly all, of the teachers have kept tolerably accurate accounts of the number enrolled, and of the average daily attendance. In most cases the teachers could not be blamed for neglect in this matter. Their rooms were often small and crowded; or they were large, with two or more schools in one room; the population was migratory and changeable; the children were irregular in attendance; the great variety of books made classification often impossible. But little as we know about the exact number who have been under instruction, and as to how many of them have learned to read; we need not hesitate to say, that thousands have been so far taught that they can read the simpler school-books, and hundreds are able to read well. Many learned to write, and many began the study of arithmetic and geography. The seeds of knowledge have been sown. The extraordinary eagerness of the people for instruction has been encouraged. They are not now human brutes, whom it would be safe to re-enslave. Irregular, cramped, partial, rudimentary, as their education has been, it has unfitted them for being chattels. They

who have not been taught at all—who may never be taught letters, have at least learned that they are men and women, and that the great heart of their country at length allows their right to be taught, and to rise up to a plane where they may put forth efforts for their own good.

#### NECESSITY OF AUTHORITATIVE SUPERVISION.

The preceding statement will show that something more of system and supervision was necessary. Useful as the schools have been, they might have been more so, had it been possible to arrange and locate them in the best manner. Had the numerous benevolent societies operating in this field been able to combine their efforts under one Superintendent, a satisfactory arrangement might have been made; but this was found to be impracticable. At the same time it was fully proved, by experience, that under a proper system the tuition fees that the colored people were able and willing to pay, together with the aid of the benevolent at the North, would secure education to all the people. As indicative of what judicious persons, not in the Government service, thought on this subject, and pointing out some of the evils to be prevented by supervision, the following extracts are taken from a report by Rev. I. J. Hoile, a Baptist Missionary, employed among the colored people at Memphis since September, 1863.

"At the end of six months, three schools were successfully operating under my direction, having an average attendance of 570 scholars. Although all needy applicants were admitted free, not more than twenty in the three schools were non-paying."

"Since the first of March, other schools have been opened in the city, by individuals and societies, upon the same principle; all of which, I believe, have been sufficiently successful to establish the fact that under a proper and uniform system, the educational necessities of the whole colored population of the city could be provided for without expense to the Government.

"While, however, it is evident that this people are able and willing to support these schools for themselves, it is equally evident that they are not yet competent to *conduct* them. Consequently they must be conducted by individuals, or societies, interested in their welfare, either under, or independent of Government control. Thus far the latter experiment (independence of Government control) has been upon trial. I think it has had a fair trial; and having had more to do with the schools, and greater responsibility in connection with them, than any other individual, I most respectfully submit it, as my full and decided conviction, that it does not work well, either for the conscientious laborer, or for the people: the for-

mer being unshielded from suspicion's evil eye and the maligner's tongue ; while the latter are constantly liable to be imposed upon by unqualified teachers, or defrauded by those whose intellectual fitness is more than counterbalanced by the dishonest or mercenary motives which govern their action. Among this people themselves, also, there are a few who have a little knowledge, against whose greed of gain and love of rule they need to be protected.

"It follows, therefore, that the educational interests of this long oppressed people should be as much under the vigilant guardianship of the Government as any others ; and, consequently, that schools and teachers should not merely be protected by, but subjected to, such official authority and direction as would render more efficient the labors of the one class, and the more certainly ensure the good of the other. The necessity of placing these schools under official supervision became apparent to me almost as soon as I entered upon the work of my mission ; and, as I have pursued that work, evidence has so accumulated, that I have frequently consulted with others on the subject, and have found that their observations and conclusions almost invariably agreed with my own. \* \*

\* After mature deliberation I have come to the conclusion, that the interests of these schools should be committed to the Department over which you have the superintendence. To the Freedmen's Department they seem more properly to belong. I take the liberty, therefore, very respectfully to suggest the propriety of your presenting this matter for the consideration of Adjutant General Thomas.

"It is easy, I think, to hit upon a plan, by which the existing schools may be brought under one general system ; new ones properly located ; and all concerned held to such accountability to the Department as would prevent or cure abuses, without any undue restraint upon the labors of individuals or societies. The objects to be aimed at are—

"1st. The securing of better order, and more thorough co-operation, by systematizing the whole work.

"2d. The employment of none but properly qualified and accredited teachers.

"3d. The fixing of such a degree of responsibility upon each and all employed as shall protect the people from imposition and abuse."

Before the report, from which the above extracts are taken, was received, it had become fully evident that such supervision was necessary ; and Maj. Gen. Washburne, then commanding at Memphis, had taken some steps to inaugurate it within his command. At this juncture the following order of the Secretary of War was issued by Adj. General Thomas :—

CINCINNATI, OHIO, Sept. 26, 1864.

ORDERS No. 26. [Extract.]

II. To prevent confusion and embarrassment, the General Superintendent of Freedmen will designate officers, subject to his orders, as Superintendents of Colored Schools, through whom he will arrange the location of all schools, teachers, the occupation of houses, and other details per-

taining to the education of Freedmen. All officers commanding, and others, will render the necessary aid.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

L. THOMAS,  
Adjutant General.

In carrying out this order, Rev. L. H. Cobb has been appointed Superintendent of Colored Schools in the District of Memphis; Rev. James A. Hawley, Chaplain 63d U. S. Colored Infantry, in the District of Vicksburg, assisted by Rev. Mr. Buckley, Chaplain 47th Colored Infantry, at Vicksburg, and Mr. C. S. Crossman at Natchez; Rev. Joel Grant, Chaplain 12th Illinois Infantry, in the District of Arkansas; Mr. W. F. Allen, at Helena; and Mr. J. L. Roberts, at Columbus, Ky.

Instructions have been framed for the guidance of Superintendents. They provide for the location and opening of schools sufficient for the people; for the payment of tuition fees from 25 cents to \$1,25 a month for each scholar, according to the ability of the parents; for admission entirely free to all who cannot pay, and clothing to be furnished, by the aid of the Industrial Schools, to those who need it; for the occupation of houses and school-rooms; for necessary apparatus and incidentals; for the government of teachers in connection with the societies that send them; for the prevention of all fraud and extortion; and for the payment, *pro rata*, of all the money remaining, after meeting incidental expenses, to the teachers,—thus aiding the benevolent societies to support their agents. The hope and probability is, that after a little time, when the system becomes fully established, and the heavy preliminary expenditure has been met, the income will be sufficient to pay all the wages of the teachers.

#### EARLY REPORTS.—PROSPECTS.

Reports concerning the beginning of the application of this system have come in from some of the superintendents. The other officers of the Department watch and assist it. So far as known, the agents and superintendents of the benevolent societies approve of the scheme, and will work with us cordially. There is no reason to doubt that great advantages to the colored people will result from it. Education—plain, simple, practical and christian, is the great want of this people; that education it is the undoubted duty of the country to afford, and she cannot afford not to give it. It is believed that the efforts and scheme

detailed above will secure this end to the highest degree allowed by present circumstances.

#### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

To meet the urgent want of dependent fugitives from slavery, and of the sick and infirm, the Secretary of War issued orders that cast-off soldiers' clothing should be given for their use by the Medical Department, as it accumulated at hospitals. Large quantities of second-hand clothing were also collected at the North, and sent down in charge of the various missions engaged in educational and other benevolent efforts. New goods, to be made up into garments, more especially for women and children, have been forwarded by the same parties; and donations from the funds of the Freedmen's Department have added to this supply.

To adapt these goods to economical use a great deal of work has been found necessary. For the purpose of performing this work; and to teach the colored women to labor effectively for their families; industrial schools have been set up. The teachers and agents of benevolent societies have done much in this direction. The Department officers encourage these efforts. Latterly Lt. R. D. Bird has been placed in charge of three such schools at Memphis; and, as far as it may be necessary or useful to do so, the supervision of such schools will be assumed by us. Where any benevolent work carries on this work efficiently, further interference than mere general oversight will not be necessary.

#### ORPHAN ASYLUMS.

The mortality attendant upon the flight of thousands from slavery; the hardships and exposure to which the colored people were at one time subject; and the death of soldiers in the army; have caused many orphans to be left among this people in camps for the dependent and in the cities. It has long been evident that some special provision for their care was necessary. The subject has been very much debated among the officers of the Freedmen's Department; and a full plan of an institution was prepared, and, with the approbation of the General Superintendent, presented to several benevolent societies, by Chaplain Warren. It was found, however, that no single society thought itself able to undertake the support of a large institution; and a

combination of different bodies for this purpose proved equally impracticable. But it is still true, that a large and central institution is desirable, to gather all needy colored orphans, and take the place of the several insufficient asylums mentioned below. We do not undervalue the efforts that have been made. They will do good, as far as they go; but they are not commensurate with the necessities of the Department.

The first attempt to provide for orphans, in an asylum, must be credited to "Aunt Maria," a colored woman, on President's Island near Memphis. She collected a considerable number of orphans, in connection with the Freedmen's Camp, and still has the care of them, aided by the supervision of Miss Mitchell, one of the earliest to hasten to the aid of the destitute people flying from slavery.

The next effort was made at Helena—commenced by Major Sargent, aided by Gen. N. B. Buford and his excellent lady. Elkanah Beard procured teachers for this institution from the Society of Friends. This place will accommodate about sixty orphans; and at present is nearly full, and in good condition.

Another institution has been commenced at Memphis, by Mrs. Canfield. This lady's husband, Lt. Col. Canfield, was killed at Shiloh; and since that loss she has devoted herself to works of benevolence. Her house will accommodate about fifty children.

Another asylum has been opened at Natchez, under the patronage of the Northwestern Freedmen's Aid Commission. No definite report of its condition has reached this office.

An undertaking of the same kind is proposed at Vicksburg, of which it is now too soon to say any thing.

#### MARRIAGE.

Among the things to be done, to fit the freed people for a life of happiness and usefulness, it was obvious that the inculcation of right principles and practices in regard to the social relations ought to find a place. The General Superintendent, before the period embraced in this report, had directed the attention of all his Assistants to this subject. The Chaplains assisting him had acted without special instructions, and a great number of couples were married, at the different camps, by Rev. Messrs. Grant, Alexander and Fisk. For the purpose of showing what was attempted, and the necessity for it, the following extracts are here

inserted from a Report, made by Chaplain Warren, dated May 18th, 1864:—

STATE UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM.

"All are aware of the fact, that there was no such thing as lawful matrimony among the slaves under the former system; but many do not know the sad consequences of this fact. An impression has prevailed extensively, that proper marriages were generally encouraged by slave owners among their people; and that great regard was paid to these connections in buying and selling servants. That these statements are not true we have abundant reason to assert. The following are answers to an interrogatory sent to the Post Superintendents in 1863. The question is—"What of their (the colored people's) marital notions and practices?" One answers—"All wrong." Another—"Their ideas of the marriage relations and obligations are very low." A third—"Most of them have no idea of the sacredness of the marriage tie, declaring that marriage, as it exists among the whites, has been impossible for them." Another says—"They know what marriage is among the whites, but have yielded to the sad necessity of their case." Still another Superintendent says—"They have had no opportunity for correct notions and practices." Another—"Loose—and from example."

"To all this we, who have been still more conversant with these people, may add any amount of testimony. We have found women who, bear indelible marks of the lash, inflicted to force them into unions hateful to them; or to break them off from attachments in which they wished to live virtuously, and make them 'take up with' others; or to force them to submit to the lust of master or overseer. Yet the freed people are in no way unfit to sustain the marriage relation properly. One of the Superintendents referred to above says—"In other cases the marriage relation exists in all its sacredness without legal sanction." And another remarks—"Free, and married, they will maintain the marriage relation as sacredly as any other race." In the more permanent camps the Superintendents unitedly declare, that the introduction of the rite of christian marriage and requiring its strict observance, exerted a most wholesome influence upon the order of the camps and the conduct of the people."

NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

But it was found that system was necessary. In the entire absence of civil law, recourse to military authority was imperative. Accordingly, the General Superintendent represented this matter to Gen. Thomas, who issued the following order, as the initial step of a general scheme:—Special Orders, No. 15—Extract—dated Natchez, Miss., March 28, 1864—

"III. Any ordained Minister of the Gospel, accredited by the Gene-  
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ral Superintendent of Freedmen, is hereby authorized to solemnize the rite of marriage among Freedmen.

By order of the Secretary of War:

L. THOMAS, Adjutant General."

In pursuance of the great object thus suggested, the General Superintendent caused to be prepared—1st. A form of Marriage certificate, which refers to the above order as the secular authority for such marriages. 2nd. A return to be made to the Post Superintendents; and 3rd, a License to Ministers of the Gospel, to marry according to the above order, accompanied with appropriate instructions.

These instructions were distributed to Chaplains and Missionaries early in April, 1864. There being two Chaplains connected with the chief office of the Department, then at Vicksburg, more attention was paid to this interest there than at other posts; and the data, on which the following remarks are founded, are chiefly derived from that post. It must not be understood however, that no progress has been made at other posts. Books for the registration of marriages were sent early to all the chief post in the Department; and such attention has been given to this subject as circumstances allowed.

#### RETURNS AND REGISTERS.

The Return, which a minister is required to make of each marriage solemnized by him, contains the ages of the parties; the admixture of blood in themselves and in each of their parents; the length of time each may have lived with another person as husband or wife, with the causes of their separation; and the number of children each may have had by former connection, or which they together may already have had. Thus it will be seen that the returns will afford most interesting statistics. Reference will be made to these hereafter.

The Registers, made up from these Returns, also afford the means of identifying parties, as far as is possible. This is most important, especially in view of questions of inheritance that may hereafter arise, and of claims on the Government by the families of deceased colored soldiers. The means of proving a true relationship, and of checking fraud, may here be found. The books, substantially made up for this purpose, have been carefully kept, and will be easily preserved.

At first far the greater number of those married were couples seeking to legalize unions already formed, some of which

had existed a long time ; and sometimes most touching is the deep satisfaction with which they hear the announcement—"Therefore, in accordance with the ordinance of God, and by the authority of the United States, I pronounce you husband and wife: and whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Latterly a greater proportion are new contracts.

The statistics to be gathered from the Marriage Registers, from the best answers that can be found to most of the pleas offered in justification of slavery ; the substance of which is, that entire subjection to the will of the master, with protection and support, is the best situation in which to secure the happiness and develope the virtues of the colored people. But there are two aspects of slavery, which these statistics reveal, and which exhibit its character so far in indelible tints. The first of these is, its inhumanity in rupturing the social relations.

#### VIOLENT RUPTURES OF SOCIAL RELATIONS.

If we are to believe the advocates of the system, the slaves generally passed their time in extreme contentment and happiness, enjoying a high degree of domestic felicity. They confess that occasionally a forcible separation of husband and wife may have occurred ; but they represent such things as extremely rare, and would have us believe that white people guilty of such violence were deemed infamous. But our Registers tell a different tale. To take that of Vicksburg only, as an example—we find returns of fifteen hundred marriages in that District up to Nov. 30, 1864. Of these three thousand persons, five hundred and sixty-seven had been forcibly and hopelessly separated from husbands and wives by the direct operation of the system of slavery : some for the personal convenience of master or overseer ; some because the master would have all his people mated on his own plantation, or not at all: but most of them by sale or removal. Thus more than one-sixth of the people whom we have recorded as married have suffered the disruption of domestic ties. And this average may fairly be raised higher, if we count the actual number of such separations, instead of merely the number of persons so separated—many having suffered this wrong more than once. To this amount of outrage is to be added the violent separation of children and parents, which occurs still more frequently. Parties have always been asked if they had children during these former connections ; and they have often answered

that they had left behind, on being sold away, one, two, six, a dozen, and even twenty ; and it has oftener appeared that children have been sold, and parents left behind. Many of these separations were of mere infants from their mothers.

Another fact revealed by these inquiries, is the astounding mortality among colored children in slavery. We have often been told of the birth and death of many—the deaths frequently amounting to five-sixths of those born. Were it not that it is a race of marvellous health and fecundity, slavery would soon have abolished itself, without importation, in the South-West, by destroying the people.

We ought also to remember the continual fear of such disruption of family ties, in which all slaves constantly lived, especially in the Northern slave States. But many have said, “They do not feel these things as we would.” This is utterly false. They are “a race of peculiarly keen feelings and domestic tendencies ; and they have had fewer means of withdrawing their minds from their griefs than we have. But they rarely got pity in their sorrows : if they were downcast, they were often whipped for “sulking.”

To this is still to be added, that the insecurity of their domestic relations necessarily produced fickleness among themselves. It seemed bad policy to love, when the most sacred feelings might any day be miserably outraged, and the dearest connections ruthlessly sundered. So temporary connections, unsanctified by any feeling of the heart, came into vogue. A roving fancy was indulged. Corruption, proceeding to incest, prevailed. A planter told one of my assistants, that he believed that every man among the three hundred people on his estate had, at some time or other, had every woman on it. There is evidence to prove conclusively, that on many plantations black men were countenanced and encouraged in practices abhorred even by heathen morality—to improve the breed of human cattle. We are shamed, as to our country and our common humanity, by having such things to say and hear. But it is time that the whole truth, that “slavery is the sum of all villainies,” should stand out before a disgusted world.

#### A SPECIMEN.

As illustrative of this subject, it may be stated, that Major Sargent, in an Appendix to a Report on his District in Arkansas,

gives extracts from the order book of a Mr. Cockrell, a planter in that State, now a Confederate "Commissioner for the Sequestration of the Estates of Alien Enemies." The book contains instructions to his Overseer, and was found in his house, which he had abandoned on the approach of our forces. One extract is as follows :—"The plantation is to produce 400 bales of cotton, 40,000 lbs. of pork, 50 stacks oats, 75 stacks fodder, 8 stacks millet, *Ten Negro Children*." He then arranges for producing the children by ordering the pairing of "Henry and Susan, Cambridge and Matilda, Sandy and Yellow Kitty," &c.

#### A REVELATION.

Still further to illustrate the miserable corruption to which slavery exposed its victims, (and, for that matter, the oppressors too)—there was a colored woman at Davis' Bend, when our forces took possession of that place,—afterward sent to Cincinnati—who can be proved, by the testimony of hundreds, to have been the kept mistress of Jeff. Davis; and she is universally reputed to be the daughter of Joe Davis, the rebel insurgent leader's brother. We know, also, of at least six persons, the offspring of white Southern women by colored men. One of these children of white women, after narrowly escaping death by drowning at the hands of his maternal uncles, is now a Presiding Elder in the Methodist Church. Another was once sold into slavery by his mother, for a "flitch of bacon."

#### MISCEGENATION—BY WHOM.

The second aspect of slavery, illustrated by these statistics, is its immorality. It may not be thought necessary to add anything to the statements immediately preceding this paragraph; but the following matter is important. Of these same three thousand people, whose marriages are recorded at Vicksburg, one thousand and fifty have been found to have white blood in their composition. There may have been more; for many are put down as black when there were suspicions of white admixture, which they denied;—for it is to be noticed, that they are already beginning to be ashamed of mixture, which was formerly a matter of pride. Here were more than one-third mixed—many almost white, a few entirely so.

We have been told that slavery is a civilizing institution, highly moral in its effect among the slaves, and productive of the

extremest type of christian civilization among the whites. It has also been a favorite sneer, directed at all advocates of emancipation, that abolition was amalgamation. The preceding paragraph is a sufficient answer to all these things. Moreover, in the course of their official action during the past year, my assistants have become cognizant of four marriages of southern white men to colored women. One of them was formerly a negro trader. His quadroon slave and mistress would not live with him without marriage, because, as she said, she had now become free, and it was no longer right to submit to that, to which she had been helplessly subjected in slavery. A Chaplain, altogether unwilling to assist at mixed marriages, was induced to perform the ceremony in this instance, by the man's saying that he had "married her in the sight of God five years ago!"

#### MORAL PROGRESS.

It was to teach and reform a people inured to these things, that the institution of lawful marriage was directed. And it has wrought grand and beneficent effects. No people, within the whole compass of history, have ever exhibited more rapid progress of a civilizing idea. It is not pretended that all the marriages that have taken place were well advised, or will be happy, or faithfully observed. When marriages among whites shall all prove so, without exception, it will be time to look for such a happy state of things among the blacks. But progress—great and encouraging—has been made; and this is all that could have been expected.

#### THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Surgeon D. O. McCord, who had had much experience among the freed people, and whose good service I here gratefully acknowledge, was announced, in Orders 114 of the Secretary of War, issued by Adjutant General Thomas, as Medical Director of Freedmen for the Department of the Tennessee and State of Arkansas, Dec. 1, 1863. Medical attendance and supplies for the people were under his control; and, according to orders, no one could practice among them without his approval. According to his Report, made June 28th, 1864, he found, on entering upon his duties, only

"Eight surgeons employed with these people. Most of them were incompetent, and relieved from duty for that reason. Now we have thirty-

two, all educated men, who take an interest in the work. Then we had but one hospital worthy of the name; now we have one in every camp, or within reach of it. Wherever the Government has colored laborers, we send surgeons, hospital and medical stores."

This favorable advance, in the medical affairs of the freed people, was hardly secured before the Surgeon General found the medical appropriations of Congress falling short of the necessities of the army in its active operations; and the Secretary of War accordingly ordered—"No issue will be made, or bills paid, by the Medical Department, on account of Freedmen not in the United States service."

Soon after, under the clause of a law enacted in July, Regulations were provided for the transfer of Freedmen's affairs to the Treasury Department.

A brief statement from me to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Hon. Mr. Harrington, in the absence of Hon. Secretary Fessenden, of the facts which parties moving in the matter seemed to ignore,—that the dependent, whom we had hoped would be provided for by the Plantation Agents, had been thrown upon military support; and that there were no other instrumentalities for their care;—cut off, they must perish; that my Assistants had been compelled, as stated before, to extend Government aid to numerous Freedmen endeavoring to help themselves; and consequently had open contracts, which could not be settled till the close of the season; Mr. Harrington, taking a common-sense view of the confusion and harm sure to occur from a transfer so unprovided for, immediately suspended the proposed Regulations of the Treasury; and, after the return of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Fessenden, and consultation with him, addressed to me the following note:—

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 23, 1864.

"SIR:—The suspension of the Regulations, whereby this Department contemplated taking immediate control of the Freedmen, has been approved by the Secretary.

"In directing such suspension, it was the expectation and desire of the Department, that the system and arrangements heretofore inaugurated, and now being prosecuted under you, should be continued without interruption until the crops now in are gathered, and the present season closed; and until this Department is prepared in all respects to assume such control under the law.

"Respectfully,

GEO. HARRINGTON,  
Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

"COL. JOHN EATON, JR.,  
Washington."

The above statements close out the general reports from my officers. Their accounts with the several funds will be settled as soon as the crops are gathered and sold.

The mass of facts clearly illustrates the great principles to which the two distinctive elements of government are assigned —the Treasury, to the collection of revenues and the disbursement of funds; the War Office, to the prosecution of military operations, and the execution of the functions of government in the enforcement of justice, whilst civil authority is in abeyance. These facts show that any confounding of the functions of the Departments must create confusion, and fail of good. In respect to the Freedmen as a whole, it is plain that the Treasury should control the funds, as for all other operations; and the War Department, having the only efficient instrumentalities, provide for the dependent, and execute justice among and toward the Freedmen, as to all others in the regions under army sway.

Had the War Office cut off Commissary and Quartermaster supplies, as it was compelled to stop medicines, the suffering and injury would have been indescribable and irremediable. As it was, my officers having hospitals and moderate supplies in their control, were able, aided by the purchase of medicines by the Freedmen's fund, to limit the extent of the disaster.

Surgeon McCord has since, in connection with the Surgeon General, the Adjutant General, and the Secretary of the Treasury, endeavored to complete arrangements for the future.

#### CONCLUSION.

The inferences from these facts are obvious. No one can apprehend them, or penetrate their philosophy, without seeing, in the policy of the Government, towards the Freedmen, the easy settlement of some of the most difficult questions of reconstruction.

The results of reconstruction depend entirely upon the material used. We can erect a granite structure neither on a foundation of hay and stubble, nor out of clay and mortar. Neither debates nor papers, but what is made of these masses during the war, whether actually voters or not, must determine the status of these regions.

With an aim to present exclusively these facts, essential to determine future action, much of the most touching and thrilling in the experience of my officers has been omitted. Intrusive fancy and

ambition have borne their mushroom fruits. Benevolence has erected its monuments, as in the sacrifice of the Vannatta and Buchanan families, and others. Their blood is on the hands of their murderers. Major Young and Captain Rogers fell sacrifices to the exposure to malarial influences and sleepless activity required of my officers in their important duty. Planting too has offered its victims, the noble Cathcart and Winchell. Medical care of the sable sick has cost the murder of the esteemed Fahnestock, and the captivity—perhaps death—of others. Not a few negroes have sealed their efforts for liberty with their blood. The falsely called chivalry have illustrated their boasts of superiority by the most diabolical atrocities of murder, mutilation and child-stealing.

The saving of capital, of life, and of civilization looks only in one direction—to the supremacy of law, affirmed as it can be, here and now, only by military power for white and black, holding all to a stern accountability.

Our country has been put to the test of the sacrifice of treasure, and comfort, and life—most severe, and yet not exhaustive—rather consistent with its mighty growth. It has also afforded the sublimest illustrations of self-sacrifice on the field of carnage. But the day of adjustments hastens, with tests more trying to our virtues.

These strains have been upon my officers, and upon all, who, like them, have taken the advance in this settlement of our essential difficulties. Those who have been faithful are commended, for their vindication and reward, to future generations. Their deeds are their best records, and will live after them. Their names, more familiar to the future than the present, are already made familiar among this people, and in this Report.

It will be seen that I am especially indebted to Col. SAMUEL THOMAS, Lieut. Cols. MITCHELL and EATON, Maj. SARGENT, Capts. WALKER and MALLORY, and Chaplains WARREN, FISK and HAWLEY. My indebtedness to Commanding Officers in the valley, who have co-operated with me, is already apparent. Since Gen. GRANT, no one has more faithfully studied the whole subject than Maj. Gen. DANA, Commanding the Department of the Mississippi. Lieut. S. N. CLARK has been specially useful in compiling this Report.

Acknowledging my special and repeated obligations to yourself, General, in all these affairs,

I have the honor to be

Your most obedient servant,

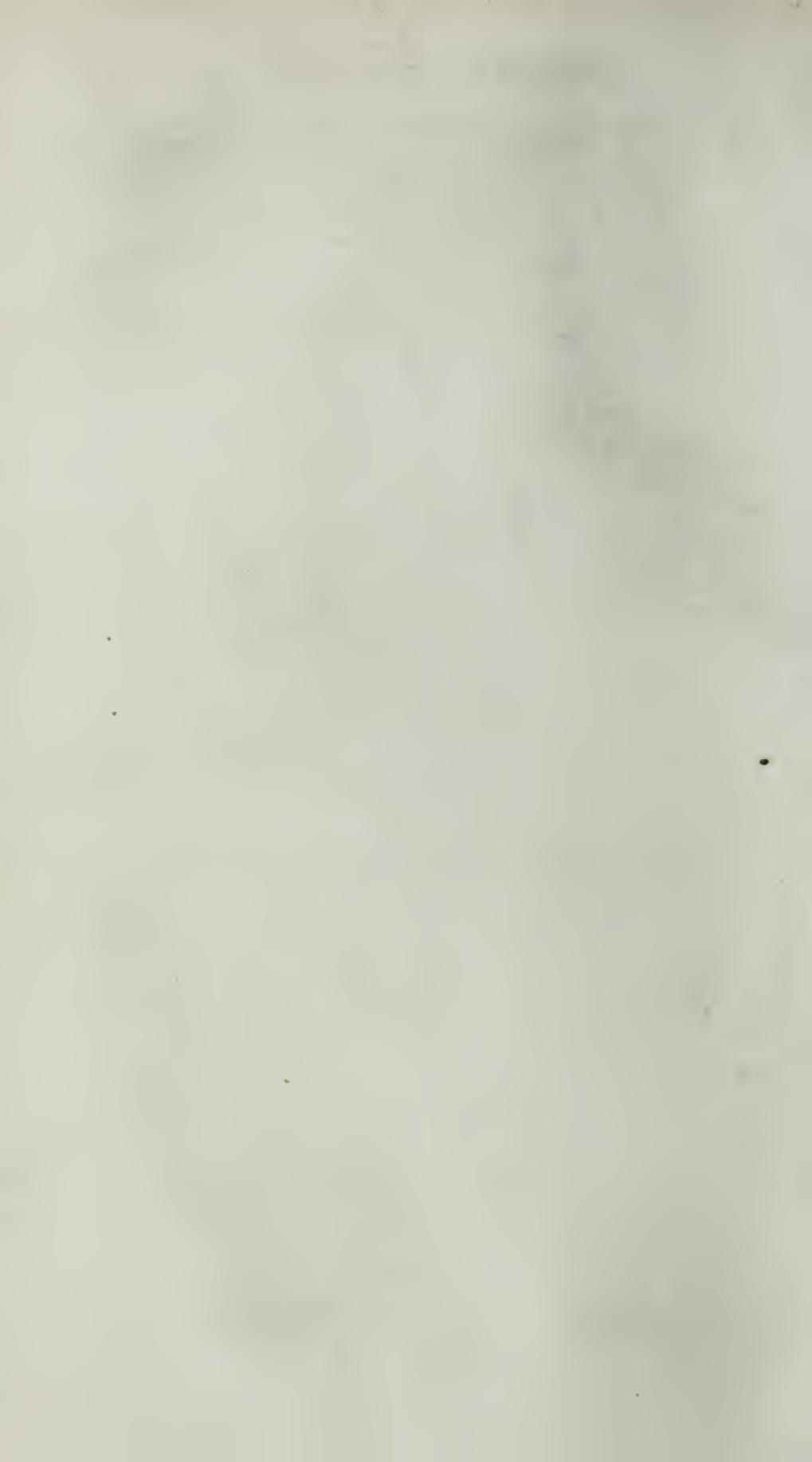
JOHN EATON, JR., Colonel,

General Superintendent of Freedmen,

Department of the Tennessee and State of Arkansas.











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